

# Women, Peace and Security Index

## 2025/26

INCLUSION



JUSTICE

SECURITY



**GIWPS**

Georgetown Institute for  
Women, Peace and Security



PRIO Centre on  
Gender, Peace  
and Security

## Countries and index scores by rank, 2025/26 WPS Index

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE
TOP QUINTILE			62	Cabo Verde	.741	123	Algeria	.621
1	Denmark	.939	63	Belarus	.739	124	São Tomé and Príncipe	.620
2	Iceland	.932	63	Chile	.739	125	Egypt	.617
3	Norway	.924	63	Palau	.739	126	Lesotho	.614
3	Sweden	.924	63	Saudi Arabia	.739	127	Ecuador	.612
5	Finland	.921	67	Malaysia	.738	128	Iran	.608
6	Luxembourg	.918	68	Albania	.731	128	Libya	.608
7	Belgium	.912	68	Fiji	.731	128	Namibia	.608
8	Netherlands	.905	70	Kuwait	.723	131	India	.607
9	Austria	.898	70	Qatar	.723	131	Philippines	.607
9	New Zealand	.898	72	Kazakhstan	.722	133	Angola	.601
11	Australia	.896	THIRD QUINTILE			133	Sierra Leone	.601
11	Estonia	.896	73	Viet Nam	.721	135	Comoros	.590
13	Ireland	.891	74	Turkmenistan	.720	135	Zimbabwe	.590
14	Slovenia	.889	75	Russian Federation	.718	137	Côte d'Ivoire	.589
15	Lithuania	.887	76	Puerto Rico	.707	138	Benin	.587
16	Canada	.885	77	Sri Lanka	.706	138	Uganda	.587
17	Latvia	.884	78	Maldives	.704	140	Congo	.583
17	Singapore	.884	79	Jamaica	.703	141	Lebanon	.575
19	Switzerland	.877	80	Bolivia	.701	142	Zambia	.566
20	United Arab Emirates	.872	80	Peru	.701	143	Togo	.562
21	Germany	.869	82	Kosovo	.700	144	Guatemala	.561
22	Japan	.866	83	Lao PDR	.698	144	Honduras	.561
23	France	.864	84	Israel	.697	BOTTOM QUINTILE		
23	United Kingdom	.864	84	Kyrgyzstan	.697	146	Djibouti	.560
25	Spain	.862	86	Panama	.696	147	Mexico	.558
26	Portugal	.861	87	El Salvador	.691	148	Eswatini	.556
27	Poland	.854	88	Jordan	.686	149	Colombia	.551
27	Taiwan	.854	89	China	.685	150	Malawi	.549
29	Serbia	.844	89	Samoa	.685	151	Mozambique	.548
30	Malta	.841	89	Tajikistan	.685	152	Kenya	.542
31	United States	.840	89	Tonga	.685	153	Gambia	.528
32	Czechia	.832	89	Trinidad and Tobago	.685	154	Guinea	.527
32	Hungary	.832	94	Gabon	.679	155	Bangladesh	.526
34	Costa Rica	.824	94	Mauritius	.679	156	Ethiopia	.516
35	Uruguay	.822	96	Indonesia	.678	157	Liberia	.512
36	Moldova	.821	97	Dominican Republic	.675	158	Iraq	.510
SECOND QUINTILE			98	Uzbekistan	.674	159	Guinea-Bissau	.508
37	South Korea	.815	99	Bhutan	.673	160	Burkina Faso	.507
38	Bulgaria	.814	100	Tunisia	.671	160	Papua New Guinea	.507
39	Italy	.811	101	Marshall Islands	.670	162	Nigeria	.495
40	Seychelles	.810	102	Morocco	.668	163	Niger	.492
41	Hong Kong	.809	102	Timor-Leste	.668	164	Mali	.478
42	Barbados	.807	104	Belize	.667	165	Chad	.476
43	Romania	.801	104	Cambodia	.667	166	Mauritania	.475
44	Mongolia	.799	106	Türkiye	.664	167	Palestine	.469
45	Georgia	.798	107	Nicaragua	.659	168	Madagascar	.466
46	Slovakia	.797	108	Botswana	.658	169	Pakistan	.462
47	Argentina	.791	108	Solomon Islands	.658	170	Somalia	.455
48	Croatia	.788	FOURTH QUINTILE			171	Cameroon	.451
49	Grenada	.787	110	Senegal	.657	172	Myanmar	.442
49	North Macedonia	.787	111	Azerbaijan	.653	173	South Sudan	.411
51	Suriname	.779	112	Kiribati	.652	174	Burundi	.407
52	Cyprus	.770	113	Federated States of Micronesia	.648	175	Democratic Republic of the Congo	.405
52	Guyana	.770	113	South Africa	.648	176	Haiti	.399
54	Paraguay	.768	115	Vanuatu	.646	177	Sudan	.397
55	Bahrain	.765	116	Ukraine	.645	178	Syrian Arab Republic	.364
56	Armenia	.762	117	Ghana	.639	179	Central African Republic	.362
57	Thailand	.761	118	Venezuela	.638	180	Yemen	.323
58	Oman	.755	119	Brazil	.632	181	Afghanistan	.279
59	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.753	120	Nepal	.631			
60	Greece	.752	121	Rwanda	.624			
61	Montenegro	.743	121	Tanzania	.624			

Possible scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1.  
Please see the inside back cover for an alphabetical list of countries and ranks.

**Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS)** seeks to promote a more stable, peaceful, and just world by focusing on the important role women play in preventing conflict and building peace, growing economies, and addressing global threats such as climate change and violent extremism. The institute pursues this mission through research that is accessible to practitioners and policymakers, global convenings, strategic partnerships, and nurturing of the next generation of leaders. Melanne Verwee, the first U.S. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues, is the institute's executive director. Hillary Rodham Clinton is the institute's honorary founding chair.

**The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)** conducts research on the conditions for peaceful relations between states, groups, and people. Researchers at PRIO seek to understand the processes that bring societies together or split them apart. Founded in 1959, PRIO is an independent research institution known for its effective synergy of basic and policy-relevant research. In addition to such research, PRIO conducts graduate training and promotes peace through conflict resolution, dialogue and reconciliation, public information, and policy-making activities.

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## Foreword

### *In women's own words*

What do you need most?

**"A sky without  
bombs and drones"**

—Peacebuilder in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>

### **Now is the time to act: Our global measure of women's well-being reveals both crisis and courage**

Since 2017, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, in collaboration with the Peace Research Institute Oslo, has produced the biennial *Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index*, which ranks countries globally on women's status across three key dimensions: inclusion, justice, and security. Drawing on data for 13 robust and globally recognized indicators, the WPS Index is the only tool that brings together insights from gender, development, and peace and security—providing a uniquely comprehensive picture of women's well-being. It enables comparisons across and within regions, tracks progress and setbacks over time, and holds governments accountable for advancing women's rights and opportunities. Together, the WPS Index's findings underscore the importance of a multidimensional understanding of women's status and the urgent need to invest in women to advance the well-being of all people and societies. Our data reaffirm that societies where women's status is higher are also more peaceful, prosperous, and resilient, including in the face of climate change and economic shocks.

Rights defenders and people of conscience stand at a critical juncture in 2025. Amid worsening conflict and rising backlash against women's rights and gender equality worldwide, we mark the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women's equality. Three decades of hard-earned progress are being eroded by authoritarian expansion, while record

levels of conflict and fragility are generating unprecedented violence and vulnerability for women and girls. This report reveals how countries and regions that once performed better on the WPS Index are now backsliding, while temporal trends show stagnation—or even decline—in women’s status worldwide. As wars and conflicts reach a historic peak, progress on women’s rights seems perilously close to a historic low.

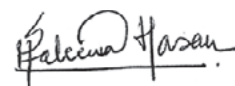
And yet there is hope. The WPS Index shows that some of the greatest improvements in women’s status have come from the most challenging and conflict-affected places. From Congo to Yemen, women have continued to organize, lead, and rebuild despite unimaginable hardship. Their persistence is a powerful reminder that change is possible even in the darkest moments, but it should not be theirs alone to catalyze.

Advancing women’s rights and status is not only an ethical and moral imperative; it is also a practical and collective one. Women have borne the brunt of backlash and violence. They have also been left to shoulder the responsibility of rebuilding their communities and improving their circumstances, often with little support. This reality must compel us to act—not comfort us.

The WPS Index remains a vital tool for governments and policymakers to identify and address areas of progress and decline; for academics and researchers to deepen understanding of global and regional trends; and for civil society, activists, and storytellers to amplify women’s voices and press decision-makers to act. But this year, on the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the WPS Index also serves as a reminder for all these agents of change: women have not given up—and neither should the rest of us.



*Melanne Verveer*  
Executive Director  
Georgetown Institute for  
Women, Peace and Security



*Syeda Haleema Hasan*  
Research Manager and  
Lead Author, WPS Index  
Georgetown Institute for  
Women, Peace and Security





## Report team and acknowledgments

This fifth edition of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index report was produced through a collaboration between the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and its Centre on Gender, Peace and Security (PRIO GPS Centre). The work on the WPS Index and report was conducted by a team led by Syeda Haleema Hasan, WPS Index Research Manager and Lead Author (GIWPS). The report team comprised Milorad Kovacevic (consultant) with Michael Gottschalk (International Monetary Fund), who were responsible for construction of the WPS Index, and Ava Kawamura and Laura Montgomery (GIWPS), who provided extensive research analysis, writing, and support. GIWPS partnered with Siri Aas Rustad (PRIO), who conducted significant research and analysis and wrote parts of the report.

For valuable guidance and review, we thank GIWPS Executive Director Melanne Vermeer, along with Managing Director Carla Koppell and Research Director Jessica Smith. We extend our gratitude to Anna Tuohey (GIWPS) for her essential support, and to Jessica Anania (GIWPS), Kristine Baekgaard (GIWPS), Rachel George (GIWPS), Kim Hart (GIWPS), Torunn Tryggestad (PRIO), and Rebecca Turkington (GIWPS) for additional reviews and suggestions. Work on the report was also facilitated by other colleagues at GIWPS, and we are grateful for their support.

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Finally, we would like to acknowledge the generous funding of the Government of Norway, which made this work possible.



## Overview

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**Of the 181 countries ranked in the 2025/26 WPS Index, Denmark continues to lead the rankings as it did in the last edition, while Afghanistan again performs the worst**

### **Global rankings and key findings: Best and worst performers largely unchanged**

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index report analyzes data across 13 indicators grouped under the three dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security to understand and monitor women's status globally (box 1). Our approach involves three layers of analysis: a global lens that highlights broad trends, country groups and regions that reveal patterns and contrasts, and country cases that uncover the nuances behind the data.

Of the 181 countries ranked in the 2025/26 WPS Index, **Denmark** continues to lead the rankings as it did in the last edition, while **Afghanistan** again performs the worst (see statistical table 1 for detailed results). The range of scores, from .279 to .939, is vast, with Denmark scoring more than three times higher than Afghanistan.

All of the 10 best-performing countries are in the Developed Countries group (figure 1; for a full list of countries in each country group and region, see appendix 2). The five Nordic countries—which ranked in the highest seven in the 2023/24 WPS Index—are now in the top five. As in the 2023/24 WPS Index report, a majority of the countries in the top quintile of the rankings are in the Developed Countries group or the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia region.

This year, for the first time, two countries in the **Latin America and the Caribbean** region are in the top quintile: **Costa Rica** (34th, up from 60th) and **Uruguay** (35th, up from 59th). They are exceptions, however, as other countries in the region perform poorly, leading to a decline in Latin America and the Caribbean's average score.

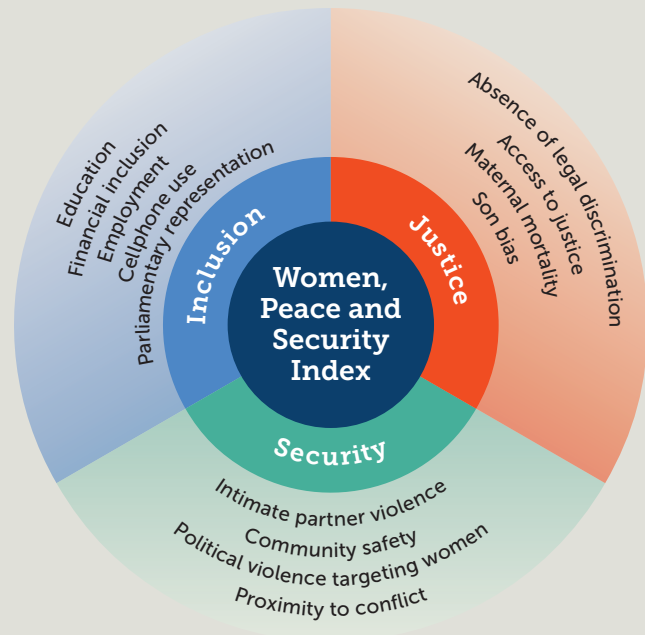
### BOX 1 Structure of Women, Peace and Security Index

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index captures 13 indicators of women's status classified under three dimensions: inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal and informal discrimination); and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels; see figure). A country's performances across the three dimensions are combined to generate its WPS Index score, between 0 and 1, and establish its ranking. The data come from recent and reputable sources, such as UN agencies, the World Bank, and the Gallup World Poll. Table 1.1 in the report defines and explains the relevance of each of the 13 indicators, while statistical table 1 at the end of the report offers detailed information, definitions, and sources.

While all indicators represent the most recent values available at the time of the study, data collection cannot keep pace with evolving global events. Consequently, the impacts of current events may not always be accounted for across the data we use. The only indicator in this report with data from 2025 is parliamentary representation—all other data are from 2024 or prior years, depending on availability. This means that the WPS Index rankings do not reflect any dramatic changes in 2025. We have, however, accompanied our findings with qualitative research to reflect the impact on our results, if any, of changes in 2025.

We updated our methodology for the 2023/24 WPS Index, and the current WPS Index follows that updated methodology. Additionally, we recalculated previous WPS indices (2017/18, 2019/20, and 2021/22) using the updated

The WPS Index captures 13 indicators of women's status within three dimensions



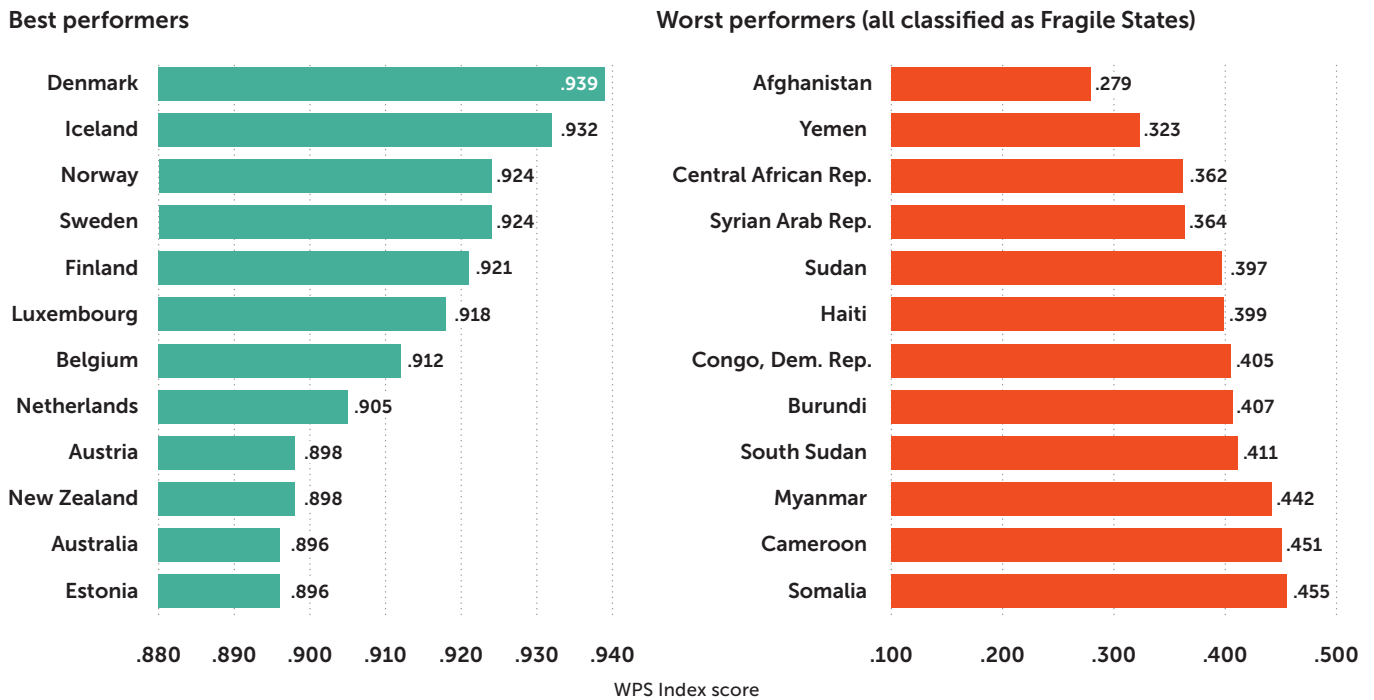
Source: Authors.

methodology, publishing our key findings from the revised estimates in December 2023. You can read the brief on our website: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/trends-in-womens-status-over-time-2017-2023/>.

Seven countries have remained in the bottom dozen since the inaugural WPS Index in 2017/18: **South Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syrian Arab Republic, Central African Republic, Yemen, and Afghanistan**. On average, in the dozen worst-performing countries, more than one in five women experienced intimate partner violence in the 12 months before the survey, fewer than half of women report feeling safe in their communities, and almost three in four women live within 50 kilometers of armed conflict. However, Yemen and some other low-ranking countries are making notable progress across various indicators, even as they struggle to improve their overall rank (see case studies in chapter 3).

#### Globally, as gains in women's status stall, conflicts escalate

Backlash and rollbacks of women's rights coincide with alarming increases in conflict and violence. The previous WPS Index report documented record-high numbers worldwide of conflict- and battle-related deaths

**FIGURE 1** The dozen best and worst performers on the 2025/26 WPS Index

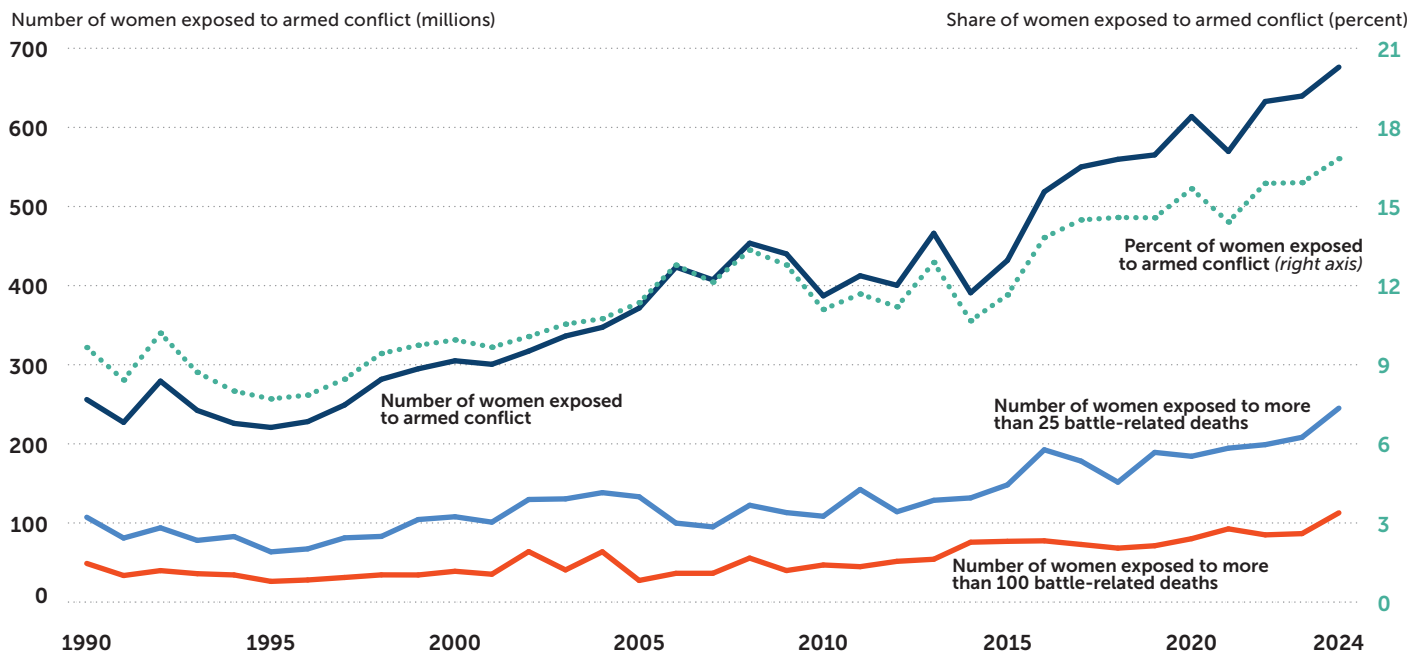
Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

(fatalities caused by warring parties that are directly related to combat, including civilian losses).<sup>1</sup> The situation has worsened since then. Recent data show approximately one person in six worldwide is exposed to conflict. In the past five years, there have been more battle-related deaths than in any other five-year period since the end of the Cold War in 1991, with the exception of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.<sup>2</sup>

In 2024, more than 676 million women globally lived in **proximity to conflict** (within 50 kilometers of armed conflict), a staggering 74 percent rise since 2010 and the highest number and proportion of women ever recorded (figure 2).<sup>3</sup> Armed conflict has disproportionate impacts on women and vulnerable groups, which are exacerbated by rising violence and backlash. Between 2022 and 2023, United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence rose by 50 percent, while women made up half of the world's 117.5 million displaced people, largely driven by the rising number of armed conflicts.<sup>4</sup>

Women's proximity to conflict adversely affects their well-being. Countries that perform the worst globally on this indicator also perform poorly on several other indicators. They score an average of 1.9 out of 4 on **access to justice** and have an average **maternal mortality ratio** of 226 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is worse than the global average (188 deaths). Moreover, the rate of **political violence targeting women** in these countries (0.279 event per 100,000) is three times the global average (0.070).

**FIGURE 2** Sharp rise in women living in proximity to conflict over the past three decades

Source: Authors' estimates based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2025); CIESIN (2018); and UNDESA (2025, online edition).

### From Ethiopia to Ukraine: Why the WPS Agenda cannot wait

We examined the situation in five conflict-affected countries—**Ethiopia, Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan, and Ukraine**—to understand the impacts of elevated levels of armed violence. In 2024, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Palestine dominated battle-related deaths globally.<sup>5</sup> In Ukraine, 92 percent of women lived within 50 kilometers of armed conflict, while in Myanmar and Palestine, this proportion was 100 percent.<sup>6</sup>

**Ethiopia**, which had one of the highest numbers of battle-related deaths in 2022–2023, remains at risk of escalation as violence and human rights abuses continue in parts of the country two years after a peace agreement was signed.<sup>7</sup> An estimated 120,000 or more women and girls have been raped during the conflict, with many still enduring pain, infection, and trauma, with little recourse or access to justice.<sup>8</sup>

**Myanmar** has been embroiled in civil war since a 2021 coup, compounding the lasting impacts of the 2016–2017 genocide against the Rohingya population.<sup>9</sup> Today, 10.4 million women and girls need humanitarian assistance, with women-led households 1.2 times more likely to live in poverty than male-led households.<sup>10</sup> Since 2020, the amount of Official Developmental Assistance to the country has dropped by 61 percent, with less than 1 percent going to women's rights groups.<sup>11</sup>

**Palestine** was designated as the most dangerous and violent place in the world in 2024.<sup>12</sup> Israel's genocide in Gaza resulted in an estimated 50,000 deaths between 2023 and 2024,<sup>13</sup> and nearly all Palestinians in Gaza had been internally displaced by 2024.<sup>14</sup> By mid-2026, 132,000 children



under age five are projected to be suffering from acute malnutrition, and nearly 55,500 malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women will need immediate nutritional support.<sup>15</sup> The United Nations Population Fund reports that a quarter million women and girls lack access to reproductive healthcare.<sup>16</sup>

In April 2023, civil war broke out in **Sudan**. Women and children account for more than half (53 percent) of the 12 million displaced people.<sup>17</sup> Some 12.1 million people (25 percent of the population) are at risk of gender-based violence, and demand for gender-based violence services rose 288 percent as of the end of 2024.<sup>18</sup> Nearly 5 million children and pregnant women are acutely malnourished. An October 2024 UN report documented at least 400 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in the year ending July 2024, though the actual number is believed to be much higher.<sup>19</sup>

The full-scale war of aggression in **Ukraine** was the deadliest conflict between 2019 and 2024, with a record 75,700 battle-related deaths in 2024 from Russian attacks.<sup>20</sup> Most (63 percent) of the 6.8 million refugees in Ukraine since 2022 are women,<sup>21</sup> and 8 million women and girls are in need of humanitarian aid.<sup>22</sup> Reported cases of conflict-related gender-based violence are up 36 percent since 2022.<sup>23</sup> Negotiations on a ceasefire have stalled, while Russia continues its assault on Ukraine, and humanitarian aid is scaled back amid funding cuts.<sup>24</sup> Ukrainian women have been central to both the war effort and the humanitarian response, but their local organizations receive less than 1 percent of global relief funds, which have been further reduced by recent aid cuts.<sup>25</sup>

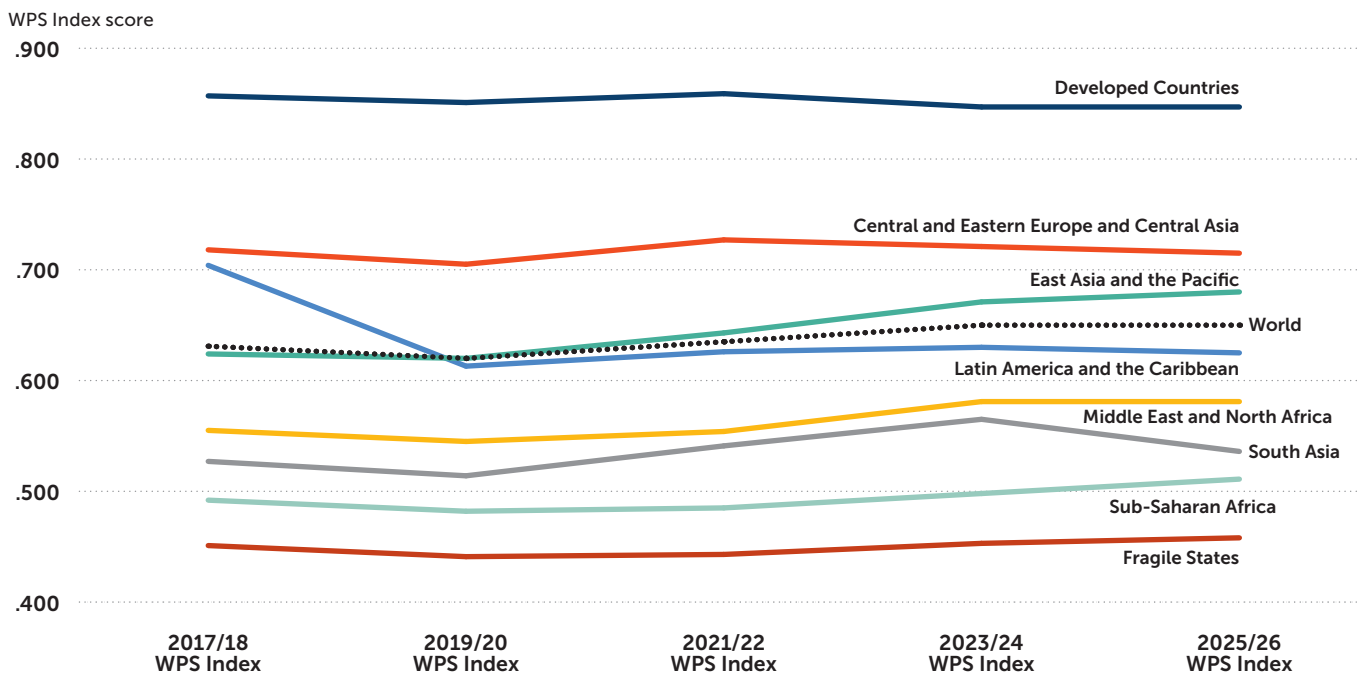
These country cases also illustrate how long-term tensions between groups, rising violence, and the rollback of WPS commitments can quickly escalate into mass atrocities, which must be addressed as part of the WPS Agenda.<sup>26</sup> For **Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan, and Ukraine**, cases have been brought to the International Court of Justice involving accusations of genocide and war crimes.<sup>27</sup>

### WPS Index scores reveal a stagnating trend since 2017/18

As conflicts worsen and backlash rises worldwide, WPS Index trends show stalling progress on women's status and even reversals of gains. This is evident in the average WPS Index scores for country groups over the eight years since the inaugural WPS Index of 2017/18, which show largely flat trendlines and some declines (figure 3). All regions registered decreases in average WPS Index scores in 2019/20, before recovering in 2021/22, followed by mixed performance in the 2023/24 and 2025/26 WPS Index editions. Regions that were previously high scorers also have had alarming changes in performance. The average WPS Index score for the best-performing **Developed Countries** group declined in the 2023/24 WPS Index and has stagnated since. The average score for the **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia** region, the second-best performing region, fell in both the 2023/24 WPS Index and the current edition. These patterns may reflect the delayed effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the impacts of worsening conflicts, which take time to appear in the data.

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**As conflicts worsen and backlash rises worldwide, WPS Index trends show stalling progress on women's status and even reversals of gains**

**FIGURE 3** Between the 2017/18 WPS Index and the current one, average regional scores have stagnated

Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

### Amid alarming results, unlikely places progressed

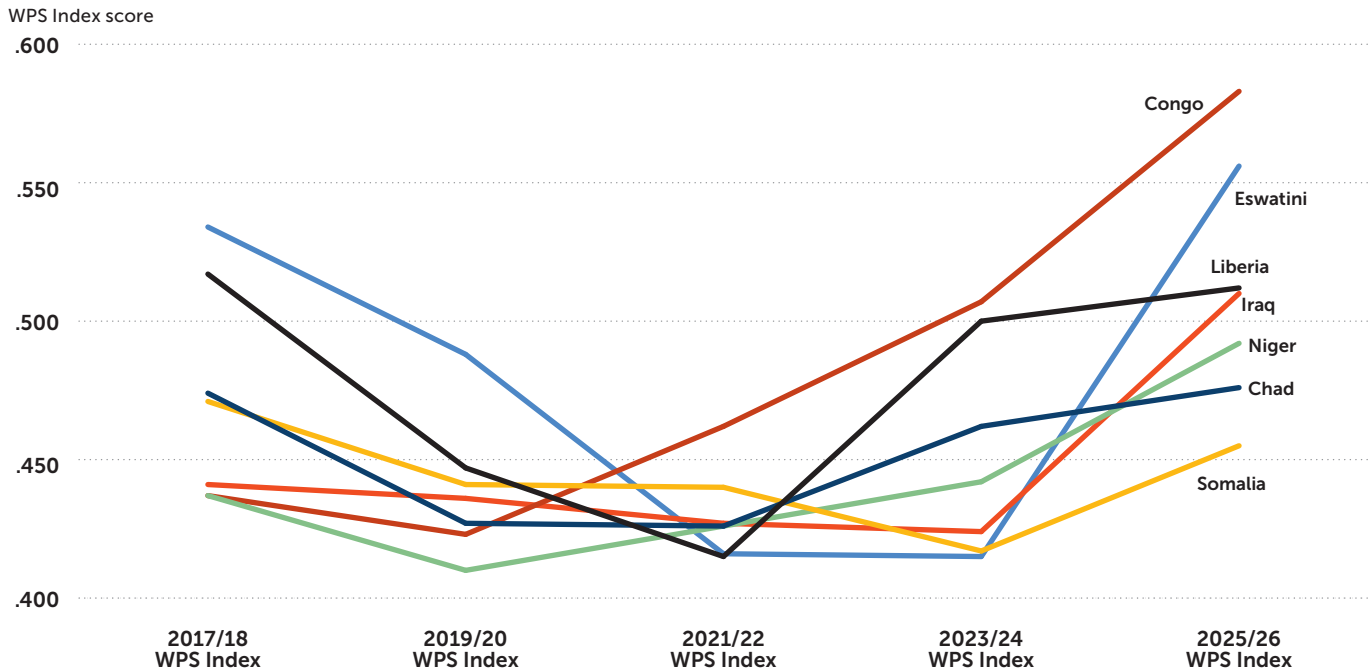
Changes in country performance on the WPS Index since 2017/18 range widely, but progress has come from some unlikely places. **Congo** and **South Sudan**, both classified as Fragile States, improved the most, with their scores rising by 33.4 percent and 26.9 percent, respectively. Of the 10 countries with the largest improvements in their scores, 5 are in the Sub-Saharan Africa region and 4 are in the Middle East and North Africa region; 5 of the 10 are classified as Fragile States.

In some cases, countries' improvements in one or two dimensions are offset by declines in other dimensions, leaving overall scores largely unchanged. This affects the average WPS Index scores of their country groups and regions and may explain the stalling regional performance. For instance, while some countries in the **Fragile States** group and in the **Sub-Saharan Africa** region had the largest improvement in inclusion and justice dimensions since the 2017/18 WPS Index, some other countries in those groups also had the largest declines in dimensional trends, thereby offsetting any gains in overall group average scores.

No country in the **South Asia** region, the **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia** region, or the **Developed Countries** group features among the 10 countries whose WPS Index score improved or deteriorated the most, which aligns with the trend of stagnating scores for these regions.

### Divergent paths: Why some countries climb the WPS Index rankings while others lag

How much and how fast a country advances on WPS Index indicators compared with other countries determines its position in the rankings. The

**FIGURE 4** Sharp increases helped countries rise from the bottom 10 of the rankings since 2017/18

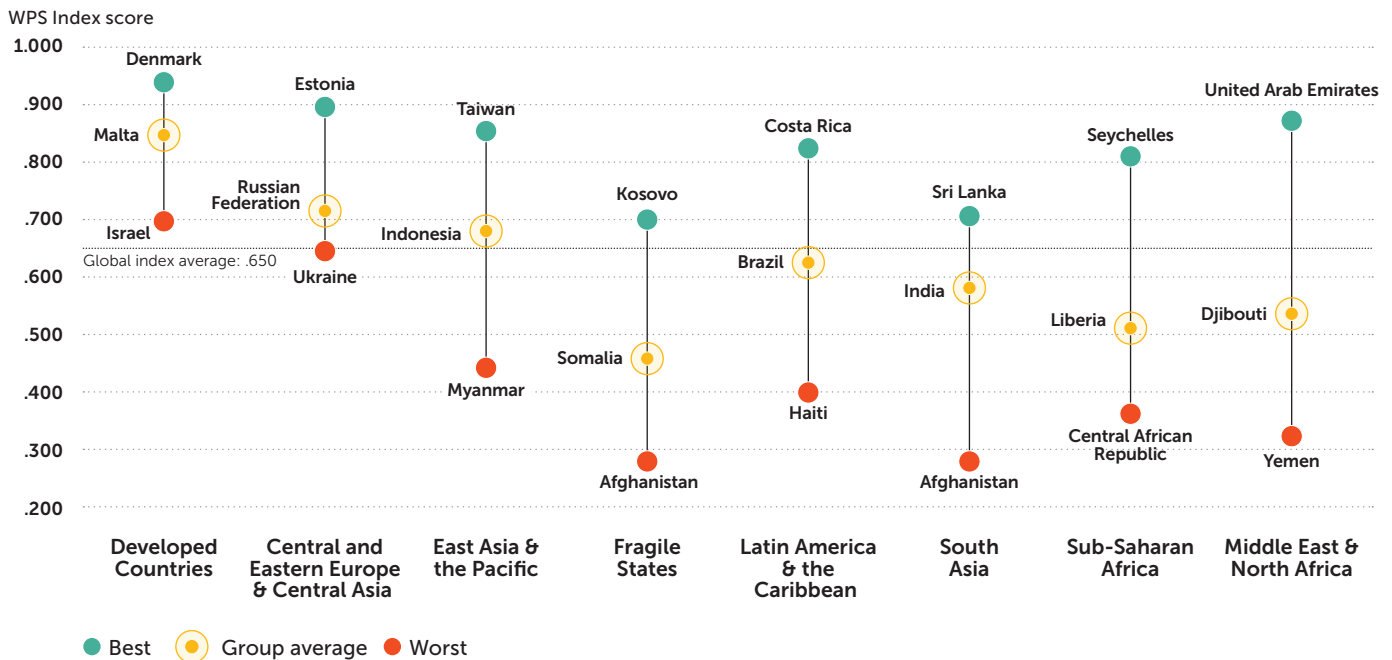
Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
 Source: Authors' estimates.

WPS Index measures absolute levels of women's status, so countries with very low absolute levels need to make large or sustained gains to improve their ranking. Countries with higher absolute levels can rise quickly in the rankings with large gains in one indicator, gains across multiple indicators, or smaller but steady gains over time. Country examples illustrate this phenomenon. For instance, seven countries that rose out of the bottom 10 on the current WPS Index (**Chad, Congo, Eswatini, Iraq, Liberia, Niger, and Somalia**) demonstrate how the level and pace of progress matter. These countries had both upward trends and some sharp increases in their WPS Index scores in recent years that moved them up in the rankings (figure 4).

### Regional scores mostly unchanged since 2023/24 as country gains offset losses

Most regional scores have stagnated since the last WPS Index, reflecting uneven and mostly lackluster country performance, which has also ranged widely within regions (figure 5).

Despite a rise in its average score on the current WPS Index, the **Fragile States** group remains at the bottom of the regional rankings. Women in the Fragile States group have 5.3 years of schooling on average, below the world average of 8.4 years, and three in five live in proximity to conflict. Leading the rankings in the group are **Kosovo, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste**—the only countries classified as Fragile States to rank in the third quintile. Kosovo had the largest improvement in rankings among Fragile States since the 2023/24 WPS Index. It advanced 18 positions, joining the group of 10 countries

**FIGURE 5** A wide range of performance on the 2025/26 WPS Index across and within regions

Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. The countries near the yellow dots have a WPS Index score that is closest to the average for the country group or region. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges and appendix 2 for countries in each group and region. Countries in the Fragile States group are also included in their regional group.

Source: Authors' estimates.

that improved the most in rankings in this edition. However, women in Kosovo continue to face discrimination and violence, with fewer than 25 percent of women employed and fewer than half of women having access to their own bank account.

The **Sub-Saharan Africa** region again has the second-lowest score among country groups (.511). Countries in the region dominate the bottom quintile of the WPS Index (many are classified as Fragile States). Women in the region have just 5.3 years of schooling on average, and maternal mortality is the second highest of any region (437 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births). Two countries were among the dozen that have deteriorated the most in rankings since the 2023/24 WPS Index: **South Africa** fell from 91st to 113th and **Rwanda** from 103rd to 121st. Yet despite its position near the bottom of the country group rankings, the Sub-Saharan Africa region continued its upward trajectory from the 2023/24 WPS Index. Eight indicators have improved, with average employment in the region (71 percent) higher than the global average (56 percent) and the second highest in the world after the **Developed Countries** group (73 percent). The **Middle East and North Africa** region performs third worst overall, while having the widest range of both scores (difference of .550) and rankings (difference of 160 positions); the **United Arab Emirates** scores .872 (ranking 20th), while **Yemen** scores .323 (180th).

The **Developed Countries** group has been the top-performing country group since the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index. It has the highest average score across 10 indicators, except on community safety, parliamentary representation, and son bias. This group also has the narrowest range of scores

and rankings, with **Denmark** scoring .939 in the 1st position and **Israel** scoring .697 in the 84th. As in previous editions of the WPS Index, Israel is the only country in this group that ranks in the third quintile. Additionally, **South Korea** and **Italy** fell from the first quintile of rankings on the current WPS Index. The **United States** returned to the top quintile this year (from the second quintile in 2023/24), improving in both ranking (rising from 37th to 31st) and score (from .823 to .840). However, the country still ranks lowest among Developed Countries in the top quintile, and recent policy changes threaten to undo progress.

As on the 2023/24 WPS Index, the **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia** region, led by **Estonia** (ranked 11th), has the highest average score (.715) after the **Developed Countries** group. However, its performance has declined for the second consecutive edition of the WPS Index. Each of the remaining regions has one country in the bottom dozen, all of them Fragile States: **Myanmar** in the **East Asia and the Pacific** region, **Haiti** in the **Latin America and the Caribbean** region, and **Afghanistan** in the **South Asia** region. Afghanistan has ranked lowest on the WPS Index since 2019/20. **Pakistan**, although not classified as a Fragile State, currently ranks 169th. It performs second-worst in the world on the inclusion dimension and is the only country where fewer than a third of women have their own cellphone. **Bangladesh** performs the worst in the South Asia region on women's proximity to conflict, at 86 percent, up from 28 percent in the 2023/24 WPS Index.

### Dimension performance reveals that women are still being left behind

Analysis of country performance on overall dimensions and their individual indicators reveals some encouraging results but largely limited progress. Moreover, variation in dimension performance shows that countries can be high achievers in one dimension but perform poorly in others, demonstrating the need for multidimensional assessments. These findings reinforce the need for urgent and comprehensive action to preserve existing gains while continuing efforts to improve women's status.

### Variance in results shows why multidimensional analysis matters

While most countries continued to perform similarly across the three dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security, some performed notably better on one or two dimensions and worse on others (figure 6).

Of the dozen countries with the largest variation in ranking across dimensions on the current WPS Index, seven—**Viet Nam, Israel, Bhutan, Colombia, Tonga, Tunisia,** and **Ecuador**—were also among the dozen with the largest variation on the 2023/24 WPS Index. On average across the three dimensions, countries scored lowest on the security dimension (.615), followed by the inclusion dimension (.625), and highest on the justice dimension (.713).

### Indicator performance has improved little since the 2023/24 WPS Index

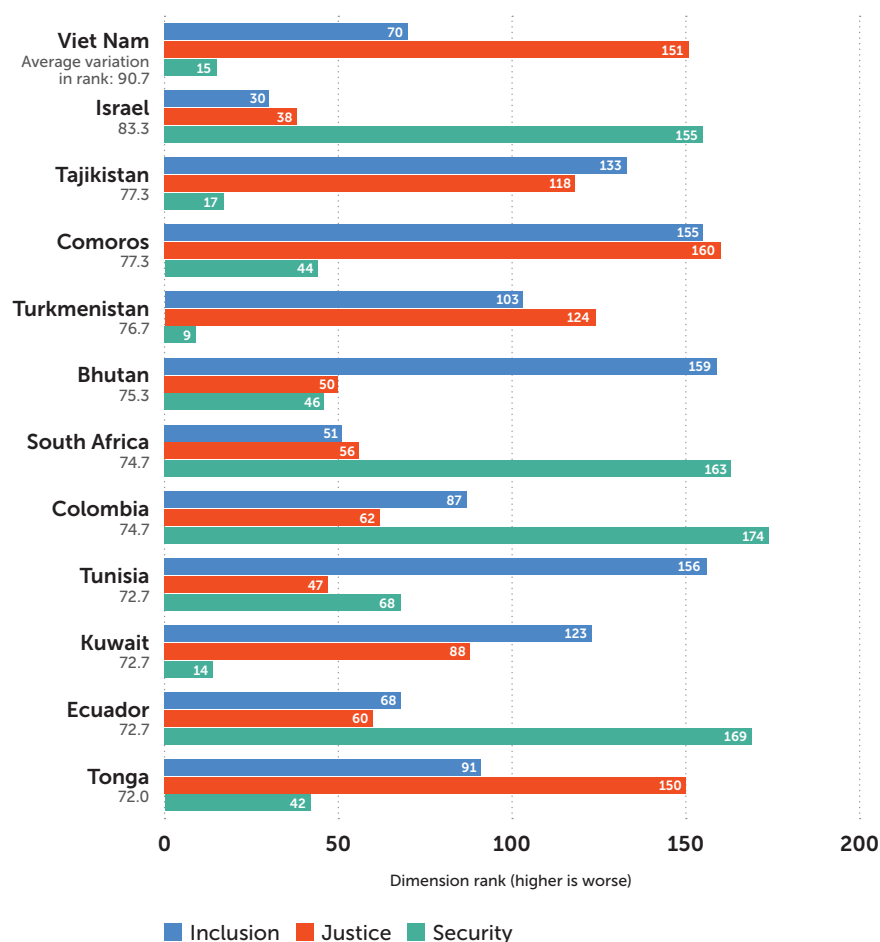
Across the indicators that make up each dimension of the WPS Index, performance is uneven. *Inclusion indicators* show a wide disparity in results. For instance, the global average for the **education indicator** stands at 8.4 years.

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**Variations in dimension performance reinforce the need for urgent and comprehensive action to preserve existing gains while continuing efforts to improve women's status**



**FIGURE 6** The dozen countries with the largest variation in ranking across dimensions of the current WPS Index



Note: Rankings range from 1 to 181, and higher is worse. Countries are ordered from largest to smallest average rank difference between dimensions. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

The top performers, where women receive over 12 years of schooling on average, are countries classified as high income and with very high Human Development Index rankings, while low performers are classified as the opposite.<sup>28</sup> The **Sub-Saharan Africa** region and the **Fragile States** group score at the bottom, with an average of 5.3 years of schooling.

Similarly, the global average for the *employment indicator* is 56 percent, ranging from 73 percent for the **Developed Countries** group to 24 percent in the **Middle East and North Africa** region. Half of the 10 top-ranked countries on this indicator are in the Sub-Saharan Africa region (**Burundi, Tanzania, Nigeria, Benin, and Togo**). Notably, Burundi, classified as a Fragile State, is tied as the highest-ranking country in the world on this indicator, with roughly 90 percent of women employed.<sup>29</sup>

Performance on *justice indicators* has also been mixed. For instance, **Denmark** ranks highest on the **access to justice** indicator, more than 40 times higher than bottom-ranking **Nicaragua**. Eight of the ten highest-ranking countries on this indicator are in the **Developed Countries** group, whose

average score on this indicator is 3.5. No other region has an overall average above 2.2.

The global average *maternal mortality ratio* improved from 212 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023/24 to approximately 188 on the current WPS Index.<sup>30</sup> **Belarus** and **Norway** have the lowest maternal mortality ratio, at 1 death per 100,000 live births. The **United States**, at 17 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, has the worst maternal mortality ratio in the Developed Countries group. **Nigeria** has the highest maternal mortality ratio globally, with 993 deaths per 100,000 live births due to pregnancy-related causes. **South Sudan**, which was the worst-performing country on this indicator in the 2023/24 WPS Index, with 1,223 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, has nearly halved that number to 692.

*Security indicators* showed slight improvements but still demonstrate poor conditions for women. **Community safety** rose from 64 percent globally on the previous WPS Index to 66 percent on the current one, but that means more than one-third of women feel unsafe walking alone at night in their communities. In highest-ranking **Singapore**, 97 percent of women feel safe walking alone at night, while in lowest-ranking **Syrian Arab Republic**, only 17 percent do. Community safety is one of the few indicators on which the **Developed Countries** group does not perform best. Its score of 65 percent puts it behind the **East Asia and the Pacific** region, at 84 percent.

**Political violence targeting women** improved minimally, from 0.080 event per 100,000 women in the 2023/24 WPS Index to 0.070 event in the current WPS Index. The **Latin America and the Caribbean** region continues to have the highest rate of political violence targeting women, at 0.338 event per 100,000 women. It also has the second-highest share of **women living in proximity to conflict** (46.6 percent, up from 43.5 percent). These results reinforce the relationship between feelings of safety at the local level and instability at the societal level.

### From stagnation to possibility: Pathways to progress

This fifth edition of the WPS Index shows a world of both crisis and courage. It confirms what women's movements have long asserted: women's status remains persistently low worldwide and is worsening amid rising backlash and violence. No country achieved a perfect score, regional averages are stagnating or declining, and risks of reversals are widening amid shrinking resources.

Yet our results also show pathways forward. Some of the steepest gains since the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index have been in fragile and conflict-affected states, underscoring that progress is possible even in the most difficult contexts—when women leaders, civil society, and committed governments work together. The WPS Index's strong, clear correlations with other indices reaffirm that the well-being of women and the well-being of nations go hand in hand. These results should galvanize stakeholders to recognize the urgency of the current moment and ensure strong and sustained action to deploy the WPS Agenda for the benefit of both women and peaceful, prosperous societies. Table 1 provides a starting point that stakeholders can use to understand the areas of women's status where countries are doing well, where they are stagnating, and where they are performing especially poorly.

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**Some of the steepest gains since the inaugural WPS Index have been in fragile and conflict-affected states, underscoring that progress is possible even in the most difficult contexts**



## CHAPTER 1

# Global rankings and key findings

**Three layers of analysis—global, region, and country—highlight broad trends, patterns, and contrasts, offering a fuller picture of women’s status across the world**

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index report analyzes data across 13 indicators grouped under the three dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security to understand and advance women’s status globally (box 1.1 and table 1.1). Our approach involves three layers of analysis: overall/global, country group/region, and country/context or theme specific. Moving between these layers of analysis allows us to see both the forest and the trees. The global lens highlights broad trends, country groups and regions reveal patterns and contrasts, and country cases uncover the nuances behind the data. Together, these layers offer a fuller picture of women’s status across the world.

### **Best and worst performers largely unchanged, but there are some surprises**

Unlike other tools that focus primarily on women’s inclusion, the WPS Index combines inclusion with justice and security to provide a more holistic measure of women’s well-being. For instance, financial inclusion is a powerful instrument to advance women’s economic empowerment, but its impact can be constrained if women face barriers to justice or live close to conflict. Findings from the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security’s global Women, Peace and Security Survey reaffirm this multidimensional reality, with women peacebuilders highlighting factors across all three dimensions as essential to their work and well-being.<sup>1</sup> Our approach recognizes that progress in one sphere does not guarantee gains in others and reflects the interconnected realities that women navigate, making the WPS Index a uniquely comprehensive tool for understanding and advancing women’s status.

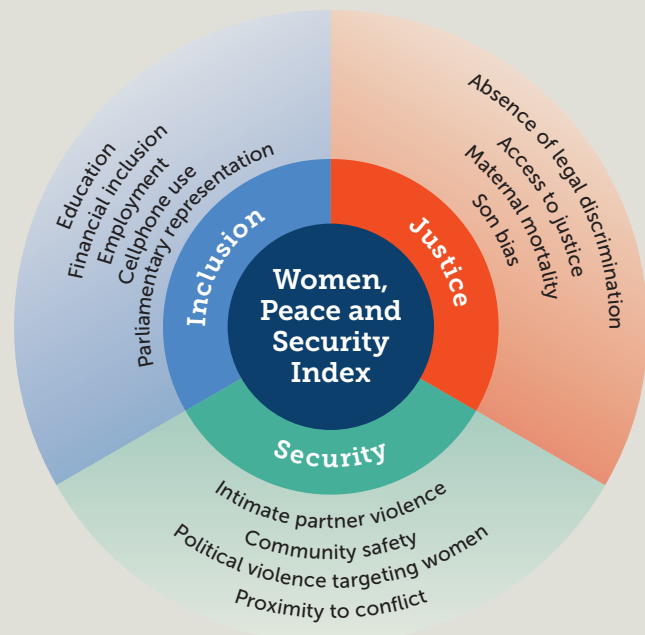
### BOX 1.1 Structure of the Women, Peace and Security Index

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index captures 13 indicators of women's status classified under three dimensions: inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal and informal discrimination); and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels; see figure). A country's performances across the three dimensions are combined to generate its WPS Index score, between 0 and 1, and establish its ranking. The data come from recent and reputable sources, such as UN agencies, the World Bank, and the Gallup World Poll. Table 1.1 defines and explains the relevance of each of the 13 indicators, while statistical table 1 at the end of the report offers detailed information, definitions, and sources.

While all indicators represent the most recent values available at the time of the study, data collection cannot keep pace with evolving global events. Consequently, the impacts of current events may not always be accounted for across the data we use. The only indicator in this report with data from 2025 is parliamentary representation—all other data are from 2024 or prior years, depending on availability. This means that the WPS Index rankings do not reflect any dramatic changes in 2025. We have, however, accompanied our findings with qualitative research to reflect the impact on our results, if any, of changes in 2025.

We updated our methodology for the 2023/24 WPS Index, and the current WPS Index follows that updated methodology. Additionally, we recalculated previous WPS indices (2017/18, 2019/20, and 2021/22) using the updated

The WPS Index captures 13 indicators of women's status within three dimensions



Source: Authors.

methodology, publishing our key findings from the revised estimates in December 2023. You can read the brief on our website: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/trends-in-womens-status-over-time-2017-2023/>.

Of the **181 countries ranked** in the 2025/26 WPS Index, **Denmark** continues to lead, while **Afghanistan** again performs the worst (see statistical table 1 for detailed results). The range of scores, from .279 to .939, is vast, with Denmark scoring more than three times higher than Afghanistan (figure 1.1).

All of the 10 highest ranked countries are in the Developed Countries group (figure 1.2).<sup>2</sup> The five Nordic countries—which ranked in the top seven in the 2023/24 WPS Index—are now in the top five, with **Norway** climbing from 7th to 3rd in rank. **Switzerland**, which previously ranked 2nd, fell to 19th as its overall score dropped by 5.5 percent (from .928 to .877). Switzerland's slide is largely attributable to other countries outperforming it and climbing in the rankings. (For a detailed discussion, see the section “Divergent path” in chapter 4.)

As in the 2023/24 WPS Index report, a majority of the countries in the top quintile of the rankings are in the Developed Countries group or the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, with the exceptions of the **United Arab Emirates** (20th) in the Middle East and North

**TABLE 1.1 WPS Index indicators, definitions, and rationales**

DIMENSION AND INDICATOR	DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<b>INCLUSION</b>		
Education	Average number of years of education of women ages 25 or older.	Education is critical to women's opportunities, freedom from violence, and health. It is a more precise measure than, for example, secondary school completion.
Financial inclusion	Percentage of women ages 15 or older who report having an individual or joint account at a bank or other financial institution or who report using a mobile money service.	Allows individuals to smooth consumption, manage risk, be more resilient, invest in education and health, and start and expand a business.
Employment	Percentage of women ages 25–64 who are employed.	Captures women's economic opportunities, which are central to realizing women's capabilities. It is preferred to labor force participation because it excludes unemployment.
Cellphone use	Percentage of women ages 15 years or older who report having a mobile phone that they use to make and receive personal calls.	Increasingly recognized as core to people's opportunities to participate in the economy, society, and politics.
Parliamentary representation	Percentage of combined seats in lower and upper houses of the national parliament that are held by women.	Political participation is a critical aspect of people's capabilities and is most widely measured by women's representation in parliament.
<b>JUSTICE</b>		
Absence of legal discrimination	Extent (from 0, complete discrimination, to 100, no discrimination) to which the laws and regulations differentiate between women and men or protect women's opportunities across 35 aspects of life and work. <sup>a</sup>	Discriminatory laws have adverse repercussions, making it harder for women to own property, open bank accounts, start a business, or take a job and enter a profession restricted to men.
Access to justice	Extent (from 0, no access, to 4, secure access) to which women are able to exercise justice by bringing cases before the court without risks to their personal safety, participating in a free trial, and seeking redress if public authorities violate their rights. <sup>b</sup>	The existence of formal laws protecting women is critical, but not enough. Women must also be able to access legal protection and exercise their rights.
Maternal mortality	The number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.	Maternal mortality is a key indicator of women's access to healthcare and the responsiveness of the healthcare system to their needs.
Son bias	Extent to which the sex ratio at birth (ratio of number of boys born to number of girls born) exceeds the natural demographic rate of 1.05. <sup>c</sup>	The excess number of births of boys over girls relative to demographic norms reflects serious discrimination against girls and women.
<b>SECURITY</b>		
Intimate partner violence	Percentage of ever-partnered women who experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their intimate partner in the preceding 12 months (current rate of intimate partner violence).	Consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals commitment to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls, current intimate partner violence rates demonstrate the level of insecurity and harm women experience in intimate relationships. The indicator can reveal prevalence, trends, and current risk factors.
Perception of community safety	Percentage of women ages 15 years or older who report that they "feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live."	Security and safety in the community affect women's mobility and opportunities outside the home.
Political violence targeting women	Number of violent, politically motivated events in which civilian women or girls are the primary target of the violence per 100,000 women. <sup>d</sup>	Political violence undermines women's ability to participate in civic spaces and decision-making processes.
Proximity to conflict	Percentage of women and girls living within 50 kilometers of an armed conflict event at least once during 2023–2024.	Armed conflict disproportionately affects women through higher risks of gender-based violence and livelihood threats.

a. Based on the Women, Business, and the Law database, a World Bank Group product that collects data on laws and regulations that constrain women's economic opportunities (World Bank 2016b). Our indicator aggregates 78 laws and regulations that differentiate between men and women across six categories (accessing institutions, using property, going to court, providing incentives to work, building credit, and getting a job), with greater weight given to six laws (requirement that married women obey their husband, mandate for paternity leave, equal remuneration for work of equal value, nondiscrimination based on gender in hiring, and prohibitions of dismissal of pregnant workers and of child or early marriage). The "accessing institutions" category includes several types of constitutional provisions for gender equality.

b. Based on V-Dem's aggregate expert judgments ranking countries on a scale of 0 (nonexistent access to justice for women) to 4 (secure and effective access to justice for women).

c. Demographers estimate a natural sex ratio at birth to be 1.05 male births to 1 female birth. We estimate missing girls using the following formula: Missing girls =  $G = (X/F)M$ , where  $X$  is the difference between the number of boys and girls born in excess of 1.05,  $F$  is the total number of girls born, and  $M$  is the total number of boys born.

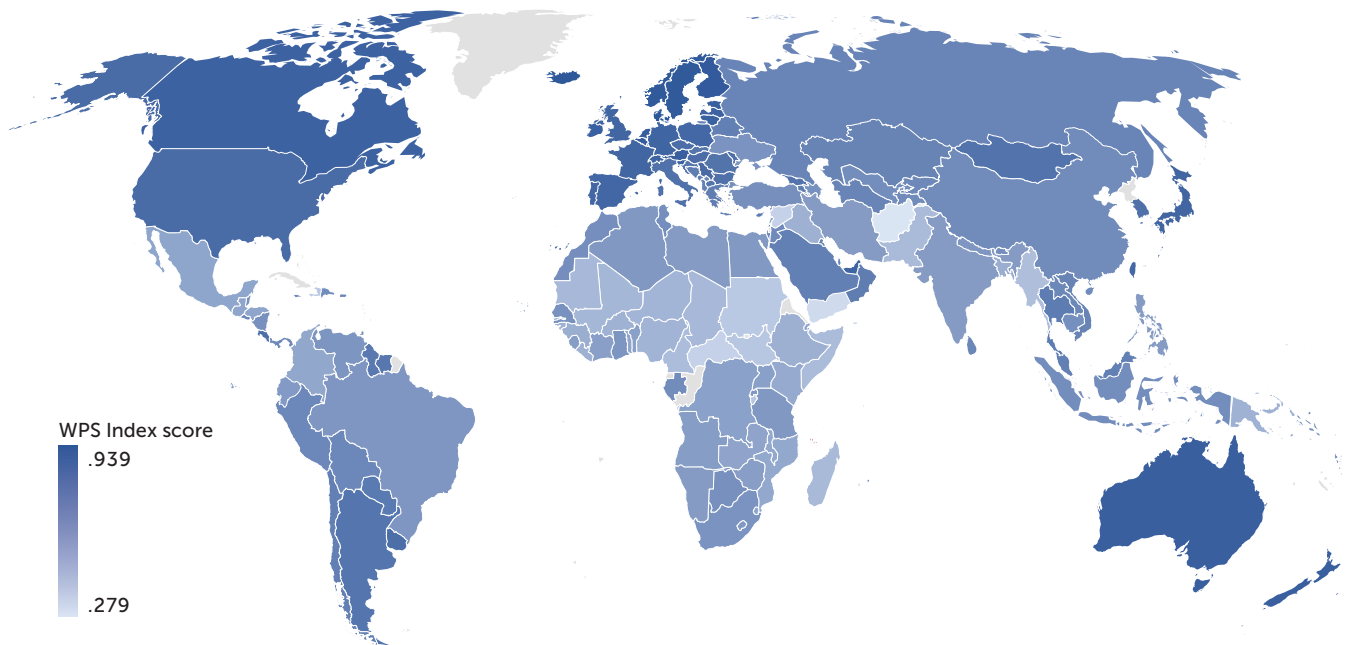
d. Does not include online or technology-facilitated gender-based violence or threats of violence, nor is it limited to women in politics.

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources and appendix 1 for the methodology for calculating the WPS Index.

Source: Authors.



**FIGURE 1.1** Women's status varies dramatically across 181 countries, with 2025/26 WPS Index scores ranging from very low (.279) to high (.939)



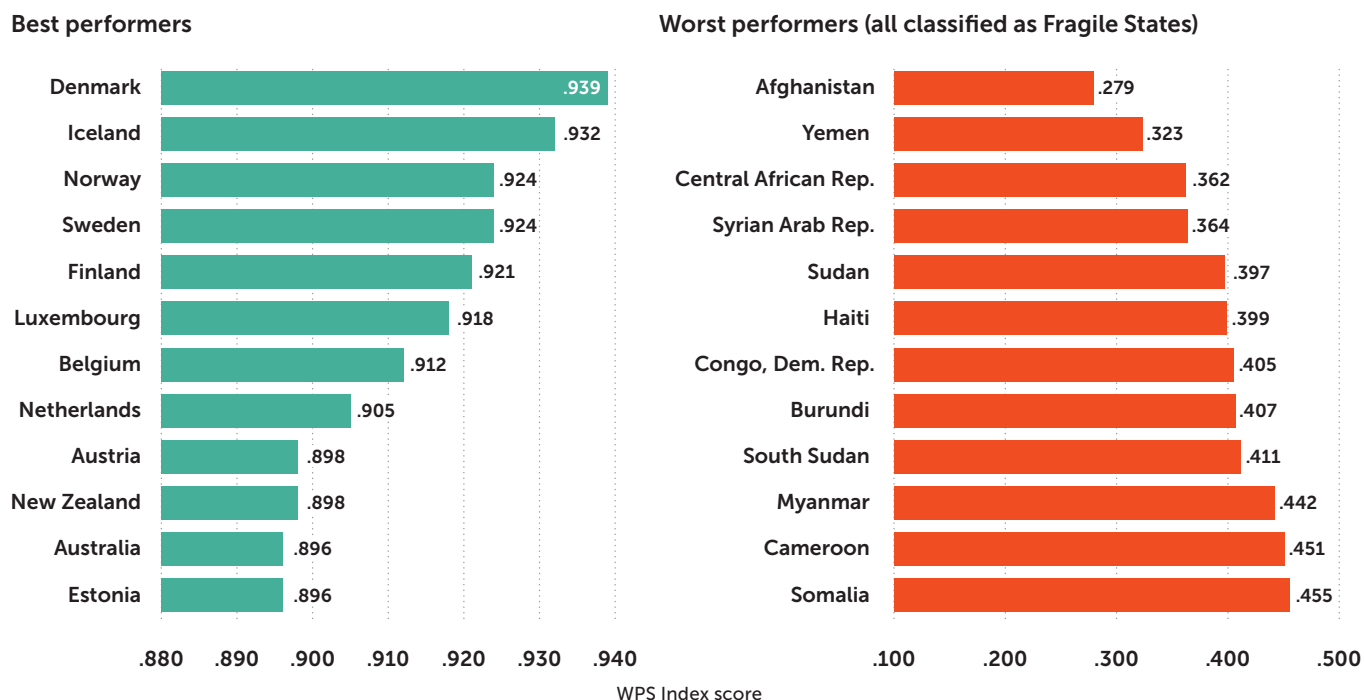
Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

Africa region and **Taiwan** (27th) in the East Asia and the Pacific region. Of the top dozen countries, **Estonia** (tied at 11th), in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, is the only country not in the Developed Countries group (see figure 1.2).

However, this year, two countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region are also in the top quintile: **Costa Rica** (34th, up from 60th) and **Uruguay** (35th, up from 59th). This is the first time for both countries and for this region to feature in the top quintile of the WPS Index rankings. Both countries have had fairly steady rises in their scores since the 2017/18 WPS Index, except for a notable drop in 2023/24 in Costa Rica and in 2019/20 in Uruguay. Costa Rica's drop in 2023/24 was driven in large part by poor performance on the security dimension. Several factors may explain this decline. Soon after the presidential election in early 2022, while Costa Rica was still reeling from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the hacker group Conti launched a series of cyberattacks against the government. With losses estimated at \$30 million a day, the government declared a state of emergency.<sup>3</sup> The homicide rate also rose that year.<sup>4</sup> Uruguay's drop in 2019/20 reflected lower scores for employment and community safety as well as poor performance on maternal mortality and political violence targeting women. Both countries recovered strongly, improving their performance on several indicators and rising in the current WPS Index rankings.<sup>5</sup> Costa Rica and Uruguay are exceptions, however, as other countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region performed poorly across indicators, lowering regional scores.

At the other end of the rankings, five of the bottom dozen countries are in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and all of them are classified as Fragile States.

**FIGURE 1.2** The dozen best and worst performers on the 2025/26 WPS Index

Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

Seven countries have remained in the bottom dozen since the first WPS Index in 2017/18: **South Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syrian Arab Republic, Central African Republic, Yemen, and Afghanistan**. On average in the dozen worst-performing countries, more than one in five women experienced intimate partner violence within the 12 months before the survey, fewer than half of women report feeling safe in their communities, and almost three in four women live within 50 kilometers of armed conflict. In addition, the average maternal mortality ratio among the bottom dozen countries is 371 deaths per 100,000 live births, double the global average of 188, while their parliamentary representation stands at 19 percent. Average scores for absence of legal discrimination, at 55, are far below the global average of 76 (on a scale of 1, worst, to 100, best); fewer than half of women are employed; and only one in five women has access to a financial account or money service. As in 2023/24, the only indicator on which the bottom dozen countries perform better than the global average is son bias, with an average ratio of 104 male births per 100 female births compared with the global average of 105.5. Moreover, some low-ranking countries, such as Yemen, are making notable progress across various indicators, but that improvement is not immediately apparent in the WPS Index rankings, which we discuss later in the report (see “Divergent paths” in chapter 4).

### Not much change in performance by country groups

In the regional standings, **East Asia and the Pacific** (with an average WPS Index score of .680) and **Latin America and the Caribbean** (.625)

follow the **Developed Countries** group (.847) and the **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia** region (.715). The East Asia and the Pacific region performs well across dimensions, although many countries in the region trail on individual indicators, particularly education, parliamentary representation, and maternal mortality. The region scores worst in the world on son bias, at 108.4 male births per 100 female births. Seven of the 23 ranked countries in the region are classified as Fragile States, with two in the bottom quintile (**Myanmar** at 172nd and **Papua New Guinea** at 160th). Similarly, the Latin America and the Caribbean region scores strongly on justice indicators but shows mixed results on inclusion and lags on security. Of the 27 ranked countries in the region, **Haiti** (in the bottom quintile) and **Venezuela** (fourth quintile) are classified as Fragile States.

Next in the regional rankings come **South Asia** (.581) and the **Middle East and North Africa** (.536). In South Asia, **Afghanistan** is the only country classified as a Fragile State. The region is among the worst performing for women's employment (39 percent), parliamentary representation (16 percent), and intimate partner violence (19 percent). It outperforms the global average on only two indicators: political violence targeting women, and maternal mortality. The score for the Middle East and North Africa region, which had been rising since 2021/22, fell by 5 percent relative to the 2023/24 WPS Index. Four of the bottom dozen countries on the WPS Index are in this region (see figure 1.2), and 8 of its 20 ranked countries are classified as Fragile States.

Finally, at the bottom of the regional rankings are **Sub-Saharan Africa**, with a score of .511, and the **Fragile States** group, with a score of .458. Almost all countries in the Fragile States group rank in the bottom two quintiles, with only four in the third quintile (**Kosovo**, **Marshall Islands**, **Timor-Leste**, and **Solomon Islands**). All 44 ranked countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, except for **Seychelles** and **Cabo Verde**, rank in the bottom three quintiles, and 17 of them are classified as Fragile States.

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**The East Asia and the Pacific and region performs well across dimensions, although many countries in the region trail on individual indicators, particularly education, parliamentary representation, and maternal mortality**

**SPOTLIGHT 1.1****The WPS Index shows the strongest correlations with peace and fragility indices**

For the 2023/24 WPS Index report, we conducted a correlations analysis and found that the WPS Index is correlated with 10 other indices related to national outcomes of peace, resilience, development, and justice, making a strong case for prioritizing investment in women. We repeated the analysis with updated data for this report and found that the conclusions still hold (table S1.1.1). The WPS Index is very strongly or strongly correlated with all but 2 of 10 indices, with the correlation being moderately strong in those two cases.

While most correlations remain strong, the WPS Index now has the strongest (negative) correlations with the Fragile States Index and the Positive Peace Index, even more so than with the Human Development Index and the University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Country Index. The current findings mean that countries with higher women's status are more likely to have less fragility, more positive peace, and greater human development and climate resilience (figure S1.1.1). This finding reinforces our emphasis on improving women's status and committing to the WPS Agenda as conflict and fragility worsen worldwide.

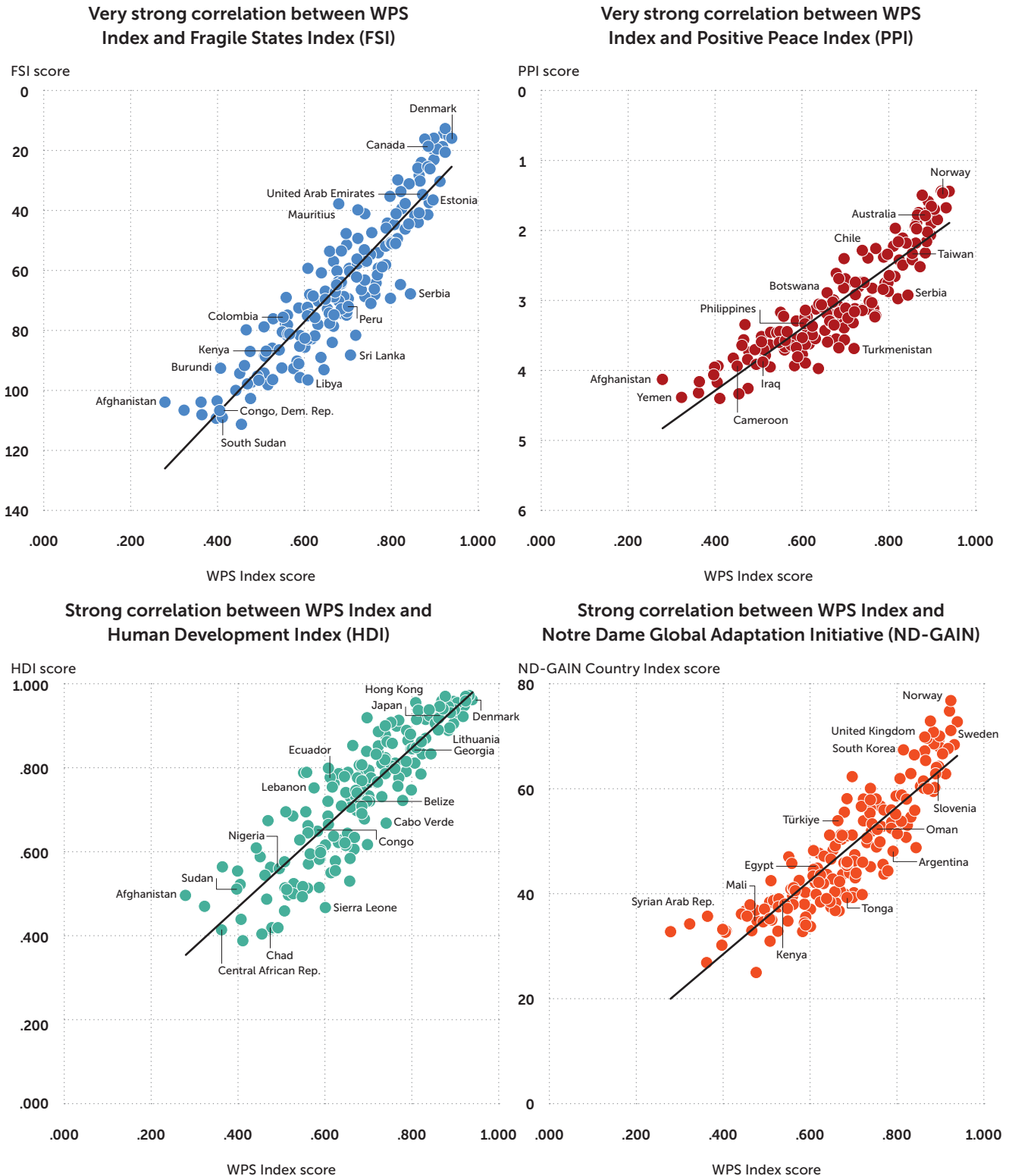
**TABLE S1.1.1 The WPS Index is strongly correlated with other global indices**

INDEX	SOURCE	MEASURE	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	STRENGTH OF CORRELATION AND IMPLICATION
Human Development Index (HDI)	United Nations Development Programme	Levels of health, education, and income	.882	Strong positive correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are also likely to have high human development.
ND-GAIN Country Index	Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative	Vulnerability to and readiness to respond to climate disruptions	.877	Strong positive correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are also likely to be better equipped to manage and respond to the climate crisis.
Rule of Law (ROL)	World Justice Project	Domestic rule of law	.842	Strong positive correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are also likely to have strong rule of law.
Corruptions Perception Index (CPI)	Transparency International	Public sector corruption	.801	Strong positive correlation. People living in countries where women's status is higher are also likely to perceive lower corruption.
Freedom in the World (FIW) (Global Freedom aggregate score)	Freedom House	Political rights and civil liberties	.663	Moderate positive correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are likely to be more free.
Early Warning Project (Statistical Risk Assessment) (EWP)	US Holocaust Memorial Museum	Risk of genocide and mass killing	-.604	Moderate negative correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are likely to be at less risk of mass killing.
Environment Performance Index (EPI)	Yale and Columbia Universities	Protection of environmental health and ecosystem vitality	-.775	Strong positive correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are also likely to be more environmentally healthy.
Global Peace Index (GPI)	Institute for Economics and Peace	Peacefulness of society	-.786	Strong negative correlation. Countries where women's status is higher are likely to be more peaceful.
Positive Peace Index (PPI)	Institute for Economics and Peace	Attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peace	-.904	Very strong negative correlation. Countries with higher women's status are likely to have more positive attitude and structures that promote peace.
Fragile States Index (FSI)	Fund for Peace	Domestic instability and violence	-.913	Very strong negative correlation. Countries with higher women's status are likely to have lesser fragility.

Note: Higher correlation values indicate greater convergence. Green shading denotes indices where higher scores reflect better outcomes (like the WPS Index) and therefore have a positive correlation coefficient; orange denotes indices where higher scores indicate worse outcomes (the opposite of the WPS Index) and therefore a negative coefficient.

Source: Authors' estimates.

**FIGURE S1.1.1** WPS Index scores have strong correlations with indices of fragility, positive peace, human development, and climate change preparedness



Note: Countries close to the diagonal line rank similarly on both the WPS Index and the other index, while those above or below the line rank better or worse on one relative to the other. The figures are based on the most recent data available as of July 2025.

Source: Authors' estimates.





## CHAPTER 2

# Backlash threatens 25 years of progress on the WPS Agenda

It has been 25 years since the UN Security Council unanimously adopted landmark resolution 1325 in October 2000, elevating women's rights and gender equality in international peace and security and formally recognizing women's pivotal role in advancing peace.<sup>1</sup> Since then, women have been instrumental in bringing peace, from the civil wars in Liberia and Somalia to the insurgencies in Colombia and the Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

In the international arena, there have been many gains in advancing the WPS Agenda, including adoption of nine more Security Council resolutions and numerous WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) and Regional Action Plans.<sup>3</sup> However, significant gaps remain as sexual violence against women continues to be used as a weapon of war, and women disproportionately experience hunger, displacement, and violence and are further disadvantaged by the climate crisis. Moreover, women report that even in peace and security areas where their participation has grown, barriers to meaningful influence persist.<sup>4</sup> With worsening conflict, growing backlash against gender equality, and rollbacks in human rights, the need is greater than ever for a sustained push to preserve the progress of the past 25 years and fully realize the WPS Agenda.

**Women report that even in peace and security areas where their participation has grown, barriers to meaningful influence persist**

### **Two and a half decades of achievements in core areas of the WPS Agenda**

There have been notable gains for the WPS Agenda thanks to the persistent efforts of peacebuilders, experts, and rights defenders worldwide. Research for the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security's Commitment 2025 project—an initiative led by the governments of Finland and Spain to track and advance progress on WPS through 2025<sup>5</sup>—found that

112 countries have adopted WPS NAPs.<sup>6</sup> Gender provisions in peace agreements have also increased, rising from roughly 13 percent in 2000 to a peak of 47 percent in 2013.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, women's representation in parliament has risen, more than doubling in the last 30 years.<sup>8</sup> Since 2000, women's leadership in peacekeeping, ambassadorships, UN roles, and national cabinet positions has also at least doubled, nearly quadrupling in the first two areas.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, women continue to lead grassroots and local peacebuilding efforts. For example, in 2022, **Yemeni** women in Taiz collaborated with the governor and community leaders to form a mediation group and negotiated with military commanders to hand over nine water tanks, regaining civilian access.<sup>10</sup> In 2023 in **Sudan**, almost 50 women's organizations advocated for inclusive peace processes under the United Peace for Sudan Platform. They successfully campaigned for adoption of their Kampala Feminist Declaration in July 2024 and helped shape key dialogues, including the African Union's Women's Dialogue in **Uganda** and United States-led Geneva peace talks.<sup>11</sup> Sudanese women also played key roles in mobilizing peaceful protests that helped end Omar Al Bashir's autocratic rule in 2019.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, in the three decades since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action affirming women's rights as human rights in international law,<sup>13</sup> numerous countries have recognized violence against women and girls as a rights violation for the first time. Today, 90 percent of countries have legislation addressing violence against women.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, several countries have revised or passed legislation that expands women's rights. Approximately 1,531 legal reforms have been adopted globally focused on advancing gender equality.<sup>15</sup> For instance, in 2024, **Poland** amended its law to recognize that sex without consent is rape, while that same year **Chile** passed a law implementing gender-sensitive education to address the root causes of sexual violence by directly combating sexist stereotypes.<sup>16</sup> In 2022–2023 alone, 18 economies enacted 47 reforms to bolster gender equality under the law, with six economies in Sub-Saharan Africa leading the reforms.<sup>17</sup>

### Rising backlash threatens to undo WPS Agenda gains

These gains notwithstanding, the recent global rise in backlash against women's rights and gender equality threatens to undo progress on the WPS Agenda. Such regressive actions are often politically expedient, deeply patriarchal, and related to anti-rights policies and erosion of democratic institutions.<sup>19</sup> Often, backlash manifests through rising intimidation using disinformation and direct attacks on human rights defenders. One in four women human rights activists reports receiving death threats.<sup>20</sup> Digital violence is also a growing form of backlash, ranging from social media attacks on women's rights activists in **Bangladesh** to threatening activists with revenge pornography in **Uganda**.<sup>21</sup> Online violence often spreads over into real life as well. Women who took part in the 2018 Aurat March in **Pakistan** not only received widespread online threats of death and rape, but were also terrorized by attackers wielding stones and batons, had legal cases brought against them, and were assailed by a right-wing counter-protest group that called for beheading the marchers.<sup>22</sup>

### *In women's own words*

What aspect of your peace and security work are you most proud of?

*“Strengthening the capacities of local women-led organizations and academic institutions for integrating gender into humanitarian assistance and empowering and protecting women and girls amid conflict in Sudan.”*

*—Peacebuilder in Sudan<sup>18</sup>*

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**The rising backlash and weakening of women's rights undermine both women's status and global peace and security**

In addition, some countries are passing repressive laws or repealing laws advancing gender equality, including laws on violence against women.<sup>23</sup> For instance, in 2021, **Türkiye** pulled out of the Istanbul Convention, a treaty that aims to prevent violence against women, and in 2022, **South Korea's** government considered a series of anti-feminist pledges, including the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.<sup>24</sup> The same year, in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, the Supreme Court of the **United States** reversed the nearly 50-year federally protected right to an abortion. Laws harmfully targeting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer plus (LGBTQ+) community are also rising. In 2024, **Ghana** and **Mali** passed laws criminalizing homosexuality, while **Bulgaria** passed an education bill that prohibits teachers from discussing LGBTQ+ topics in schools.<sup>25</sup> In the **United States**, several states have passed a multitude of anti-LGBTQ+ laws, policing areas such as gender-affirming care.<sup>26</sup> National governments have also dismantled gender-equality initiatives. In 2024, **Argentina** abolished its Ministry of Women, Genders, and Diversity, which monitored services for women, including the country's domestic violence hotline. That same year, **Georgia** removed mandatory gender quotas in parliament.<sup>27</sup>

The rising backlash and weakening of women's rights undermine both women's status and global peace and security. Global progress on reducing maternal deaths is slowing markedly. The global average maternal mortality ratio fell by nearly one-third between 2000 and 2015 (from 325 maternal deaths per 100,000 births to 224). Since then, between 2015 and 2023, the rate of progress has nearly halved, with the ratio reaching 188 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023.<sup>28</sup> Girls' education is suffering as well. As of 2024, roughly 119 million girls were out of school, with those residing in conflict- or crisis-affected countries facing double the likelihood of being out of school compared with girls in nonconflict contexts.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, the climate crisis disproportionately harms women and vulnerable communities. It threatens their livelihoods and security by depleting natural resources and women's access to them, such as agricultural production and water reserves, and exacerbates risks of gender-based violence and sexual violence, which rise as economic and infrastructural fragility worsen.<sup>30</sup> Despite these disproportionate impacts, women's representation in climate delegations remains low. Women made up just one-third of party delegations to the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), not much different from their representation 10 years earlier.<sup>31</sup> The gender, climate, and security nexus remains neglected and needs urgent attention: the WPS Index reveals that countries where women's status is higher are better prepared to respond to the climate crisis.

**Gender gaps are closing too slowly as implementation and funding lag**

According to the *Global Gender Gap Index 2025* report, although gender gaps have narrowed slightly since 2006, at the current pace of progress it will take 123 years to attain global gender parity.<sup>32</sup> The impact of slowing progress on the WPS Agenda is alarming. Gender provisions in peace agreements declined from a peak of 47 percent of all peace agreements in 2013 to roughly 24 percent in 2023. Women's groups were not formally represented at any of the peace agreements reached in 2023.<sup>33</sup> Men still hold a majority

of parliamentary positions as progress on women's representation in parliaments has slowed: 2025 had the smallest gains in women's representation (2.3 percentage points) since 2005.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, despite progress, women still hold only 24 percent of ambassadorships, 13 percent of defense minister posts, and under 10 percent of peacekeeping positions.<sup>35</sup> Earlier we noted **Sudanese** women's leadership in peace work, but despite women's critical and costly contributions, they were sidelined from decision-making in the transitional government, and their demand to reserve 40 percent of parliamentary seats for women has gone unfulfilled.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, while many countries have gender-equality laws on the books, there are notable implementation gaps, even in countries with strong legal protections for gender equality.<sup>37</sup> For instance, although women are legally guaranteed about 64 percent of the rights men hold on average globally, countries have put in place less than 40 percent of the mechanisms needed to fully enforce the laws.<sup>38</sup> Without systems for monitoring compliance, assessing penalties, or ensuring access to justice, these laws often fail to translate into real change for women. Similarly, 98 of the 190 countries reviewed for the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index have laws requiring equal pay for equal work. However, only 35 of these countries have adopted pay transparency or enforcement tools, leaving a wide gender wage gap globally, with women earning an average of 77 cents for every dollar men earn for the same work.<sup>39</sup> Even reforms on paper are progressing at the slowest pace in two decades, with the past three years witnessing the lowest number of gender-equality reforms since 2001.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, although 112 countries have adopted WPS NAPs in the past two decades, **nearly a third (30 percent) of NAPs expired in 2022** and have not been renewed or updated. Several NAPs also need more work on content and implementation, as they do not include a prevention lens, root cause analysis, or meaningful participation of women.<sup>41</sup> These challenges are evident in the climate-WPS nexus. Many NAPs mention climate only superficially, without translating commitments into concrete actions, indicators, or resources for implementation.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, only 31 percent of NAPs in effect in 2023 directly reference disarmament, arms control, and military operations, which are important tools under the WPS Agenda to address systematic and widespread conflict-related sexual violence. Overall, key NAP implementation challenges include weak political will, as well as a lack of dedicated resources (including funding) and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.<sup>43</sup>

Until 2023, global aid flows were on the rise. Official development assistance (ODA) funding dedicated at least in part to gender-related issues rose from 5 percent in 2002 to nearly 40 percent in 2023.<sup>44</sup> ODA directed to women's organizations in fragile and conflict-affected states also rose markedly between 2006 and 2023, although it still made up less than 1 percent of development assistance and was especially limited in conflict contexts.<sup>45</sup> Recent widespread cuts to aid, which are projected to be as high as 17 percent for 2025, are shrinking an already limited pool of resources, with adverse consequences for the WPS Agenda and women's rights globally.<sup>46</sup> A March 2025 UN Women survey found that 47 percent of women-led and

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Although women are legally guaranteed about 64 percent of the rights men hold on average globally, countries have put in place less than 40 percent of the mechanisms needed to fully enforce the laws

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A UN Women survey in March 2025 found that 47 percent of women-led and women rights organizations expected to shut down within six months if current funding cuts persisted

women's rights organizations expected to shut down within six months if current funding cuts persist, with 72 percent reporting that they had already laid off workers and 51 percent reporting that they had suspended programming.<sup>47</sup> Most severely affected were organizations that focus on gender-based violence, healthcare, livelihoods, and multipurpose cash assistance.

Preliminary results of an online survey of peacebuilders by Humanity United found that 71 percent of respondents in 32 countries reported decreased funding since January 2025, and almost half revealed that funds will be exhausted by the end of the year.<sup>48</sup> In early 2025, following severe cuts to US global aid,<sup>49</sup> the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) announced the termination of funding for 48 grants focused on maternal, sexual, and reproductive healthcare—including for survivors of violence and rape—as well as life-saving care in more than 25 conflict-affected countries.<sup>50</sup> The consequences are particularly damaging for **Fragile States**. More than 70 safe spaces and service centers that once supported survivors of gender-based violence have shut down in **Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen**, leaving more than half a million women and girls to face the impacts of violence without assistance.<sup>51</sup>

Rising militarization and defense spending, particularly in conflict-affected countries, also adversely affect development initiatives intended for women and girls. UN Women notes that countries with higher military spending are less likely to implement measures combatting violence against women and uncompensated labor.<sup>52</sup> For example, while **Ukraine's** top budget priorities in 2022 and 2023 were defense and social spending, in 2025 they were defense and investments in the economy.<sup>53</sup> As war persists, defense costs are expected to continue to rise and social aid to fall—a stark reminder of the tradeoff between militarization and development programs.





## CHAPTER 3

# Globally, conflicts escalate as gains in women's status stall

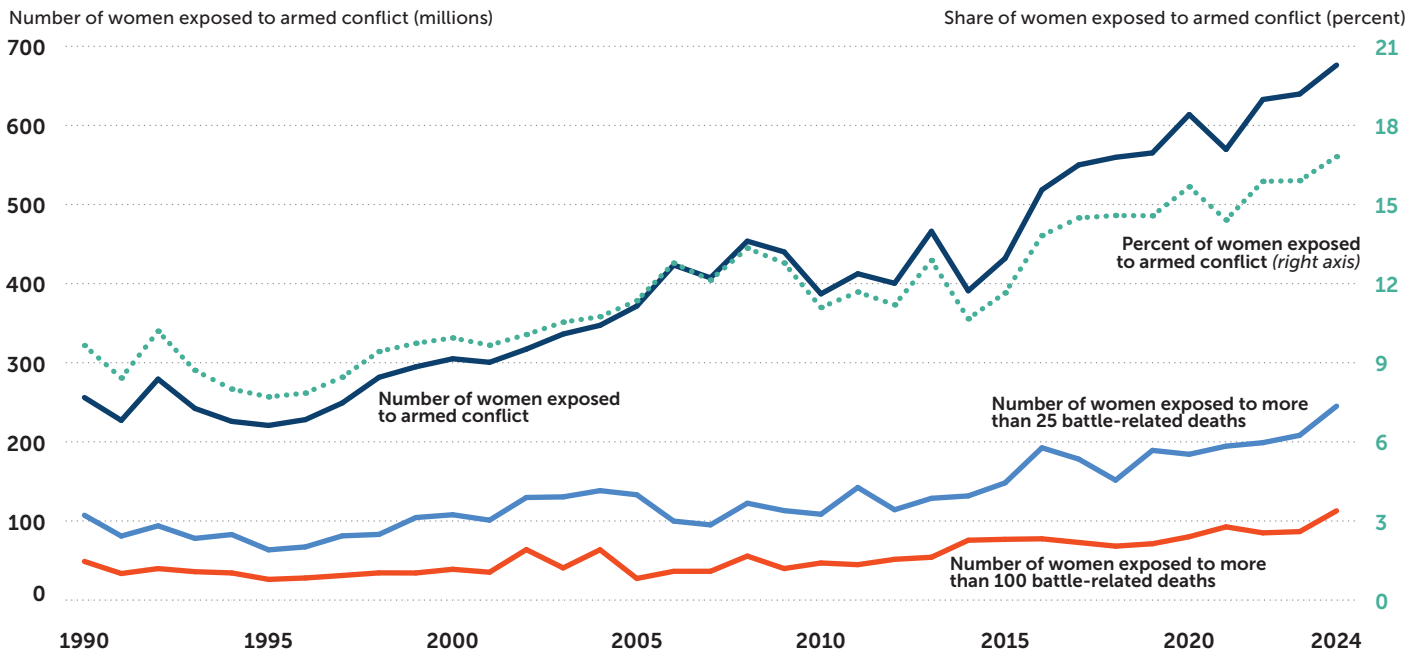
Backlash and rollbacks of women's rights coincide with alarming increases in conflict and violence. The previous WPS Index noted the record-high numbers worldwide of conflict- and battle-related deaths (fatalities caused by warring parties that can be directly related to combat, including civilian losses).<sup>1</sup> The situation has worsened since then. **Recent data show approximately one person in six worldwide is exposed to conflict.**<sup>2</sup> That year also witnessed a historic peak in state-based conflicts, with 61 active conflicts across 36 countries, the highest number recorded since World War II.<sup>3</sup>

### More women in proximity to conflict

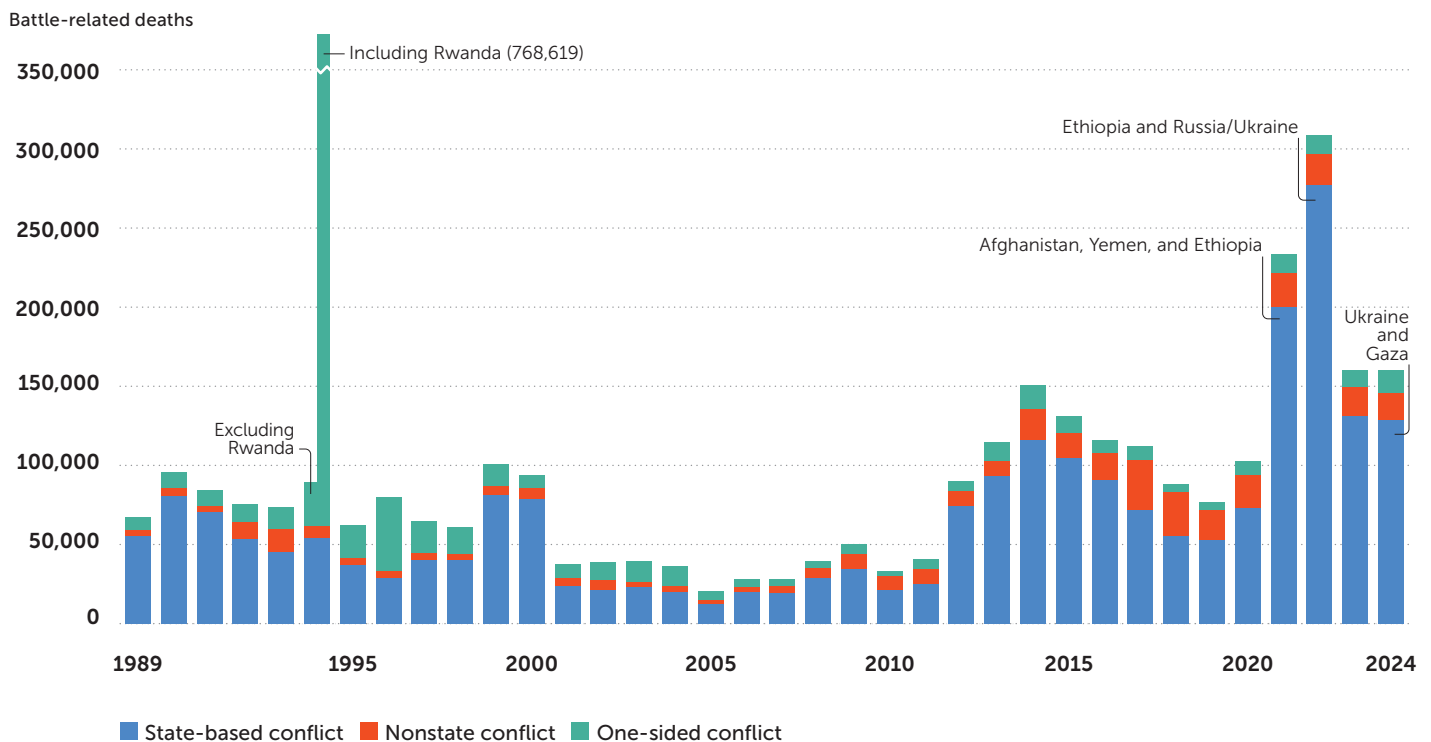
In 2024, the Peace Research Institute Oslo reported that **more than 676 million women** (17 percent of all women in the world) **lived within 50 kilometers of armed conflict**, a staggering 74 percent rise since 2010 and the highest number and proportion of women living in proximity to conflict ever recorded (figure 3.1).<sup>4</sup> Armed conflict has disproportionate impacts on women and vulnerable groups, impacts that are exacerbated by rising violence and backlash. Between 2022 and 2023, United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence rose by 50 percent, while women made up half of the world's 117.3 million displaced people, possibly driven by the rising number of armed conflicts.<sup>5</sup>

While a majority of women in proximity to conflict reside in areas experiencing low-intensity conflict (1–24 battle-related deaths), a large proportion are exposed to medium-intensity (25–99 battle-related deaths) and high-intensity (100 or more battle-related deaths) violence, with **exposure to more intense conflict rising sharply in recent years** (see figure 3.1).

Armed conflict has disproportionate impacts on women and vulnerable groups, impacts that are exacerbated by rising violence and backlash

**FIGURE 3.1** Sharp rise in women living in proximity to conflict over the past three decades

Source: Authors' estimates based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2025); CIESIN (2018); and UNDESA (2025, online edition).

**FIGURE 3.2** Recent peaks in violence have been caused by multiple large and persisting conflicts and have resulted in higher battle-related deaths than in the past

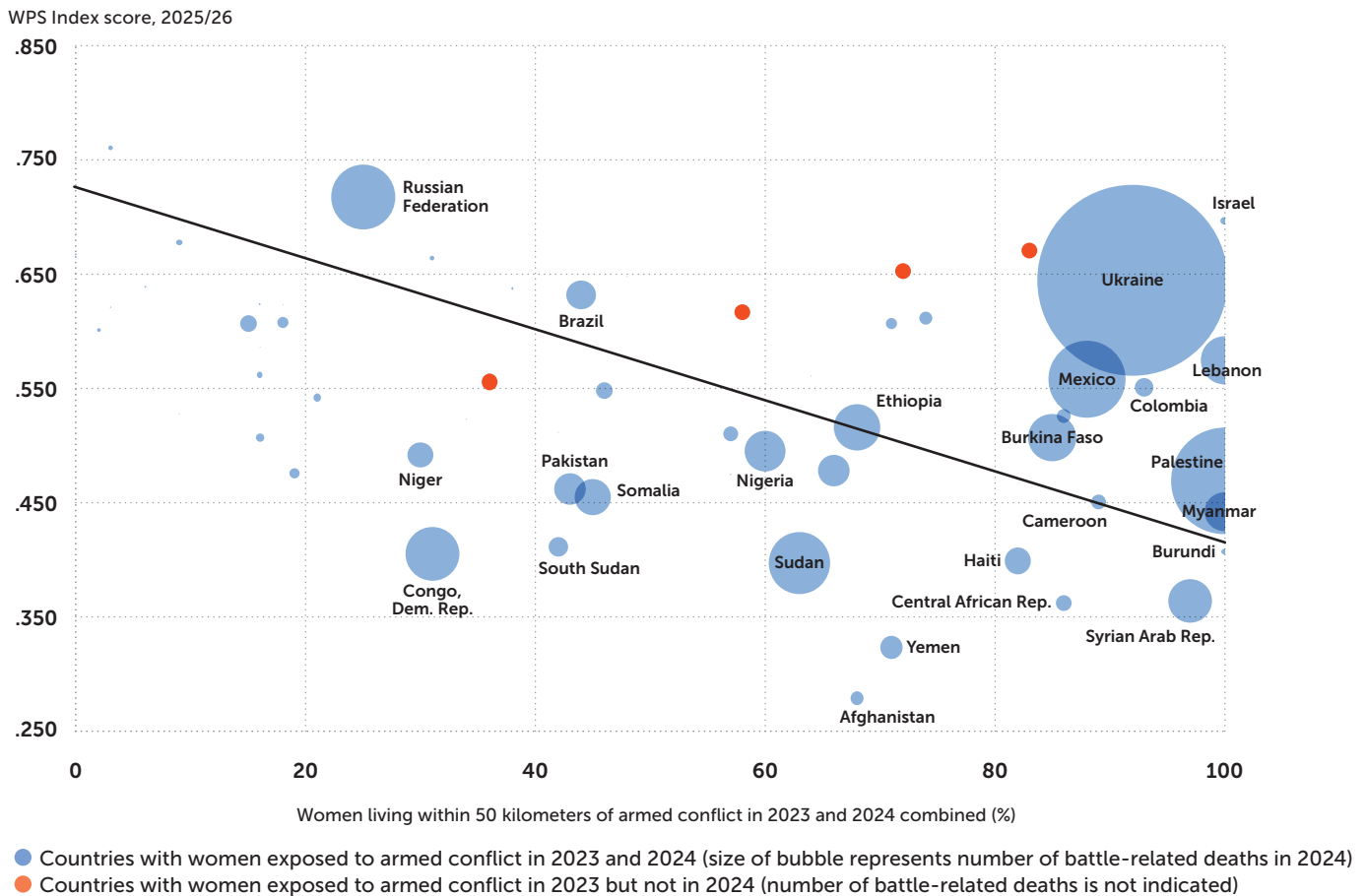
Source: Authors' estimates based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2025); CIESIN (2018); and UNDESA (2025, online edition).

During 2024, about 245 million women—nearly one-third of all women affected by conflict—lived within 50 kilometers of a medium-intensity armed conflict event, and around 113 million women lived in zones of high-intensity conflict.<sup>6</sup>

**Women’s proximity to conflict adversely affects their status in society.** Countries that rank in the bottom-performing quintile globally on the proximity to conflict indicator also perform poorly on several other indicators. They score an average of 1.9 out of 4 on access to justice and have an average maternal mortality ratio of 226 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is worse than the global average (188 deaths). Moreover, the rate of political violence targeting women in these countries (0.279 event per 100,000) is three times the global average (0.070), and just over one-third (38 percent) of the women in these countries have access to their own bank accounts.

In the past five years, there have been more battle-related deaths than in any other five-year period since the end of the Cold War in 1991, with the exception of the genocide in **Rwanda** in 1994, when more than 760,000 people were killed (figure 3.2). Although the level of violence has been punctuated by peaks caused by single conflicts over the period 1989–2024, since 2021 these peaks have been caused by several large

**FIGURE 3.3 Women’s status and exposure to armed conflict are inversely related**



Source: Authors’ estimates based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2025); CIESIN (2018); and UNDESA (2025, online edition).

conflicts. Alarming, violence seems to have settled at a higher level than 20 years ago.

Comparing countries' proximity to conflict with their WPS Index score, as we also did in our 2023/24 report, we found that two key relationships remain unchanged (figure 3.3). First, there is a negative correlation between proximity to conflict and the WPS Index score, indicating that women's status tends to be higher in societies where women are not exposed to armed conflict (the reverse is also true). Second, countries experiencing large conflicts, such as **Ukraine**, dominate in battle-related deaths,<sup>7</sup> whereas some other countries, such as **Lebanon**, **Myanmar**, and **Syrian Arab Republic**, had fewer battle-related deaths but larger shares of women living in proximity to conflict. There are exceptions, such as **Palestine**, where 100 percent of women live in proximity to conflict and the number of battle-related deaths is high, at more than 21,000 in 2024 alone (which is likely underreported given data constraints).

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In Ukraine, 92 percent of women live within 50 kilometers of armed conflict, while in Myanmar and Palestine, this proportion rises to 100 percent

### From Ethiopia to Ukraine: Why the WPS Agenda cannot wait

To improve understanding of the worsening conflict and the scale of devastation that elevated violence and insecurity can cause, we examined the situation in several conflict-affected countries. In 2024, four countries were among those with the highest levels of violent conflict: **Myanmar**, **Palestine**, **Ukraine**, and **Sudan**, with the first three dominating battle-related deaths that year.<sup>8</sup> These contexts cumulatively account for hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of injuries and displacements. In Ukraine, 92 percent of women live within 50 kilometers of armed conflict, while in Myanmar and Palestine, this proportion rises to 100 percent.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, during 2023–2024, Ethiopia grappled with the aftermath of atrocities that impacted hundreds of thousands of women. These five countries stand out as case studies for 2024, showing why WPS cannot wait. But they are not alone, as dozens of countries worldwide face persistently high violence and fragility.<sup>10</sup>

**Ethiopia**, which had one of the highest numbers of battle-related deaths in 2022–2023, remains at risk of escalation as violence and human rights abuses continue in parts of the country two years after a peace agreement was signed.<sup>11</sup> Assessments by the Tigray Health Bureau and Mekelle University estimate that at least 120,000 women and girls have been raped during the conflict, largely by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers, with many still enduring pain, infection, and trauma, with little recourse or access to justice.<sup>12</sup>

**Myanmar** has been embroiled in civil war since a 2021 coup, compounding the lasting impacts of the 2016–2017 genocide against the Rohingya population.<sup>13</sup> Today, 10.4 million women and girls need humanitarian assistance, with women-led households 1.2 times more likely to live in poverty than male-led households.<sup>14</sup> Less than half of the women in Myanmar feel safe walking alone at night. A UN Women report found that in 2021 half of the women in the country had limited access to health services and that almost 7 in 10 women reported that their household income had fallen since the coup.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, an earthquake in March 2025 that caused severe destruction and killed more than 3,600 people has

left women and girls at higher risk of trafficking, gender-based violence, and sexual abuse.<sup>16</sup> Since 2020, the amount of ODA to the country has dropped by 61 percent, and less than 1 percent of that aid goes to women's rights groups.<sup>17</sup>

**Palestine** was designated as the most dangerous and violent place in the world in 2024 by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Conflict Index.<sup>18</sup> Israel's genocide in Gaza resulted in an estimated 50,000 deaths between 2023 and 2024.<sup>19</sup> Nearly all Palestinians in Gaza (roughly 2 million) had been internally displaced by 2024, heightening their insecurity and risk of gender-based violence.<sup>20</sup> As of August 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification declared famine in the Gaza governorate, projecting that it would expand to other areas by the end of September 2025. By mid-2026, 132,000 children under age five are projected to be suffering from acute malnutrition, and nearly 55,500 malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women will need immediate nutritional support.<sup>21</sup> Israel's destruction of healthcare and maternal care infrastructure has severely impeded access to safe services, especially for pregnant and postpartum women.<sup>22</sup> UNFPA reported that only 7 of the 18 hospitals that are still partially functioning in Gaza are able to provide maternity services, with almost a quarter million women and girls lacking access to reproductive healthcare.<sup>23</sup>

In April 2023, civil war broke out in **Sudan** between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Although gender-disaggregated data are limited, UN Women reported that women and children accounted for more than half (53 percent) of the 12 million displaced people.<sup>24</sup> Some 12.1 million people (25 percent of the population) are at risk of gender-based violence, and demand for gender-based violence services rose 288 percent as of the end of 2024.<sup>25</sup> Nearly 5 million children and pregnant women are acutely malnourished, and 64 percent of female-headed households are food insecure. Conflict-related sexual violence is rampant, perpetrated largely by RSF fighters but with reports of violence by the Sudanese army as well. An October 2024 UN report documented at least 400 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in the year ending July 2024, though the actual number is believed to be much higher.<sup>26</sup> Other reports note an alarming rise in ethnically targeted sexual violence as well, and a rise in suicides among women, especially in non-Arab communities of Darfur and Al Gezira.<sup>27</sup>

Women's leadership in **Sudan's** protest movements in 2019 made world headlines, but the women were sidelined in the transitional government. Their inclusion in formal peace processes has been limited historically as well, with Sudanese women comprising just 8 percent of negotiators during the 2006 Darfur Peace Process and 10 percent of those during the Juba Peace Process that ended with a signed agreement in 2020.<sup>28</sup> Some organizations, including the Darfur Women's Forum, that joined the Juba Peace talks were able to raise concerns about conflict-related security and women's political participation; however, testimonials reveal their persistent exclusion from discussions.<sup>29</sup>

The full-scale war of aggression in **Ukraine** remained the deadliest conflict between 2019 and 2024, with a record 75,700 battle-related deaths in

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**In Palestine, 132,000 children under age five are projected to be suffering from acute malnutrition by mid-2026, and nearly 55,500 malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women will need immediate nutritional support**



*In women's own words*

“In the conditions of war and constant threats to the whole country, the safety of my family is a basic and most important need. A sense of security, confidence in the future, the ability to live without fear for loved ones —this is what many Ukrainian families lack now. Constant stress, workload, and anxiety due to the situation in the country and responsibility for the team and organization —all this affects the psychological state of my daughters and my family. My husband serves in the Ukrainian army, and I am constantly worried. I need confidence that the country is moving forward and that our efforts and losses will really change the lives of Ukrainians for the better.”

—Peacebuilder in Ukraine

2024 from Russian attacks.<sup>30</sup> Most (63 percent) of the 6.8 million refugees in Ukraine since 2022 are women,<sup>31</sup> and 8 million women and girls are in need of humanitarian aid.<sup>32</sup> Reported cases of gender-based violence are up 36 percent since 2022 (with conflict a key factor). Ukraine’s Prosecutor General’s Office reported registering 310 cases of conflict-related sexual violence as of August 2024, mainly perpetrated against women. Additionally, UN Ukraine has documented more than 400 cases of conflict-related sexual violence since 2022, 302 perpetrated against men and 119 of them against women.<sup>33</sup> Negotiations on a ceasefire have stalled, while Russia continues its assault on Ukraine and humanitarian aid is scaled back amid funding cuts.<sup>34</sup> Ukrainian women have been central to both the war effort and the humanitarian response, but their local organizations receive less than 1 percent of global relief funds, which have been reduced further by recent foreign aid cuts.<sup>35</sup>

These country cases illustrate how long-term tensions between groups, rising violence, and the rollback of WPS commitments can quickly escalate into mass atrocities.<sup>36</sup> For **Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan, and Ukraine**, cases involving accusations of genocide and war crimes have been brought to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).<sup>37</sup> In 2020, Gambia brought a case to the ICJ against Myanmar (pending) for mass atrocities (including acts of genocide) against the Rohingya population, and in 2024 the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Myanmar’s Senior General and Acting President Min Aung Hlaing.<sup>38</sup> In May 2024, South Africa brought a case to the ICJ accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza. While the case is still pending, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Gaza in November 2024.<sup>39</sup> That same month, a United Nations Special Committee found “Israel’s warfare methods in Gaza consistent with genocide, including use of starvation as [a] weapon of war.”<sup>40</sup> In April 2025, Sudan brought a case to the ICJ against the United Arab Emirates accusing the country of supporting the paramilitary RSF in committing genocide against the Masalit community in West Darfur (dismissed for lack of jurisdiction).<sup>41</sup> In March 2023, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Commissioner for Children’s Rights, Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, for the war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer of children from Ukraine to Russia.<sup>42</sup> Further arrest warrants were also issued for other war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine.<sup>43</sup>

Mass atrocities such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity are often deeply gendered and must be addressed as an integral part of the WPS Agenda.<sup>44</sup> As well as preventing atrocities, this moment demands renewing the commitment to the WPS Agenda as an urgent and indispensable framework for responding to escalating violence worldwide, sustaining peace, and protecting those most at risk.



## CHAPTER 4

# WPS Index scores reveal a stagnating trend

Patterns of stagnating or declining WPS Index scores may reflect the delayed effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as worsening conflicts

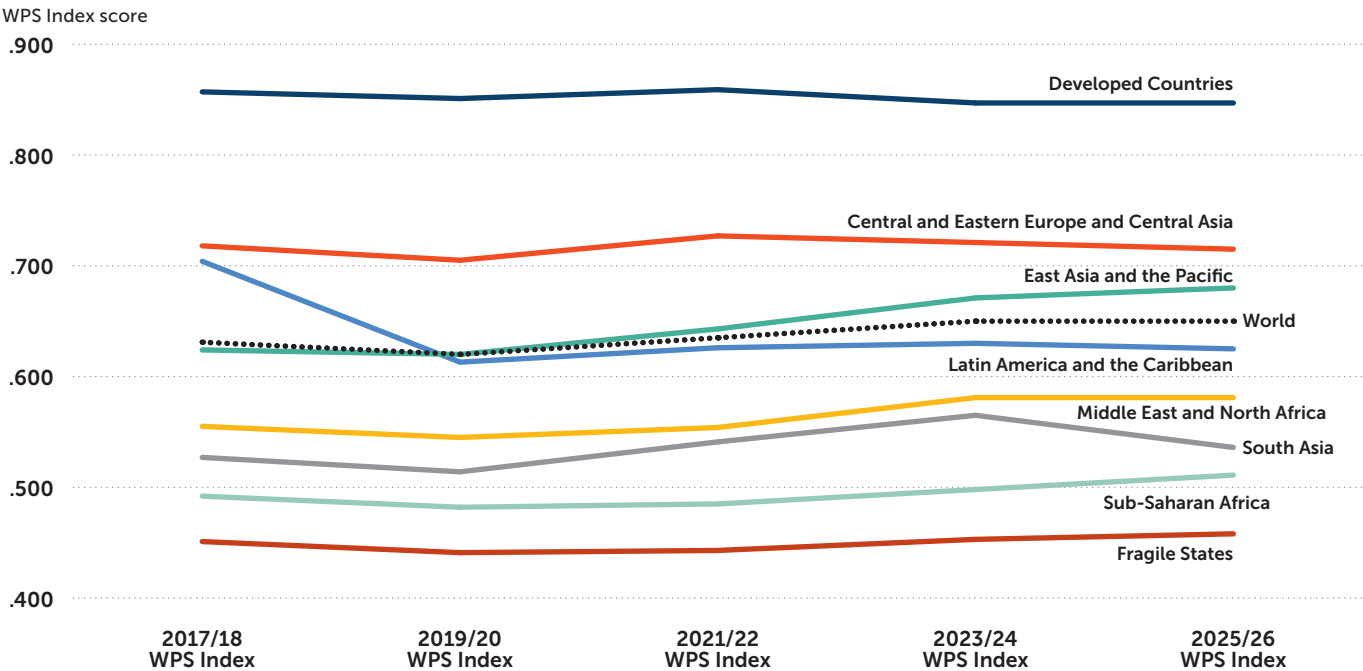
As conflicts worsen and backlash rises worldwide, WPS Index trends show stalling progress on women's status and even reversals of gains. This is evident in the average WPS Index scores for regions over the eight years since the inaugural WPS Index of 2017/18. These scores show largely flat trendlines and some declines (figure 4.1). All regions registered declines in their average WPS Index scores in 2019/20, before recovering in 2021/22, followed by mixed performance in 2023/24 and 2025.

Regions that were previously high scorers also have had alarming changes in performance. The average WPS Index score for the best-performing **Developed Countries** group declined in the 2023/24 WPS Index and has stagnated in the current one. The average score for the **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia** region, the second-best performing region, declined for a second consecutive year. Some of these patterns may reflect the delayed effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as worsening conflicts, which take time to appear in the data.

### Amid alarming results, unlikely places progressed

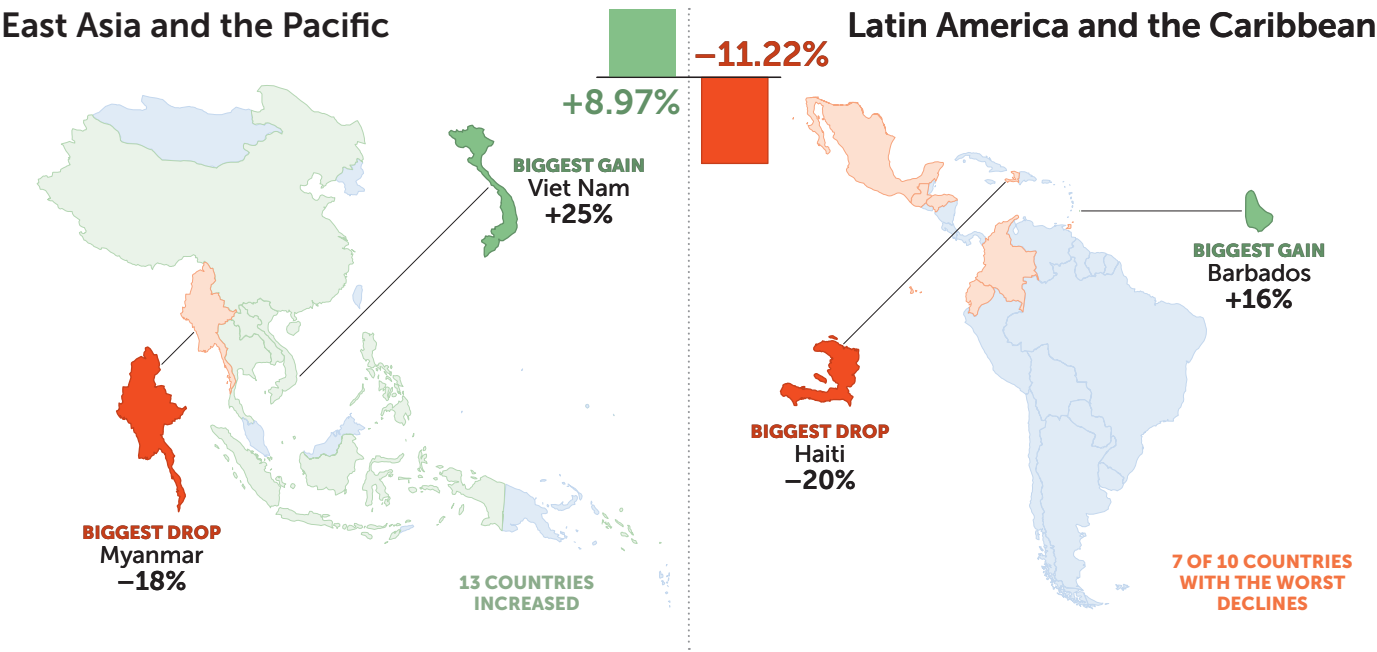
Changes in country performance on the WPS Index since 2017/18 range widely (figure 4.2), but progress has come from some unlikely places. **Congo** and **South Sudan**, both classified as Fragile States, improved the most, with their scores rising by 33.4 percent (from .437 to .583) and 26.9 percent (from .324 to .411), respectively (table 4.1). Of the 10 countries with the largest improvements in their scores, 5 are in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 4 are in the Middle East and North Africa; 5 of the 10 are classified as Fragile States.

**FIGURE 4.1** Between the 2017/18 WPS Index and the current one, average regional scores have stagnated



Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

**FIGURE 4.2** Regions whose WPS Index scores improved or declined the most since 2017/18



Source: Authors' estimates.

**TABLE 4.1** Ten countries whose scores have improved or declined the most on the WPS Index since 2017/18

IMPROVED THE MOST SINCE 2017/18		DECLINED THE MOST SINCE 2017/18	
COUNTRY (REGION AND COUNTRY GROUP)	CHANGE IN SCORE (PERCENT)	COUNTRY (REGION AND COUNTRY GROUP)	CHANGE IN SCORE (PERCENT)
<b>Congo</b> (Sub-Saharan Africa, Fragile States)	33.4	<b>Haiti</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean, Fragile States)	–20.2
<b>South Sudan</b> (Sub-Saharan Africa, Fragile States)	26.9	<b>Ecuador</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean)	–18.7
<b>Bahrain</b> (Middle East and North Africa)	26.2	<b>Honduras</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean)	–18.7
<b>Viet Nam</b> (East Asia and the Pacific)	24.7	<b>Myanmar</b> (East Asia and the Pacific, Fragile States)	–17.5
<b>Djibouti</b> (Middle East and North Africa)	22.5	<b>Colombia</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean)	–13.4
<b>Sierra Leone</b> (Sub-Saharan Africa)	21.2	<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean)	–12.9
<b>Yemen</b> (Middle East and North Africa, Fragile States)	21.0	<b>Sudan</b> (Middle East and North Africa, Fragile States)	–12.2
<b>Congo, Dem. Rep.</b> (Sub-Saharan Africa, Fragile States)	19.1	<b>Burkina Faso</b> (Sub-Saharan Africa, Fragile States)	–11.4
<b>Libya</b> (Middle East and North Africa, Fragile States)	17.4	<b>Mexico</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean)	–11.2
<b>Angola</b> (Sub-Saharan Africa)	16.5	<b>Guatemala</b> (Latin America and the Caribbean)	–10.1

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

In some cases, countries' improvements in one or two dimensions are offset by declines in other dimensions, leaving overall scores largely unchanged. This affects the average WPS Index scores of those countries' regions, which may explain the stalling regional performance. For instance, while some countries in the **Fragile States** group and in the **Sub-Saharan Africa** region had the greatest improvement in inclusion and justice dimensions since the 2017/18 WPS Index, some other countries in those groups had the greatest declines in dimensional trends (see chapter 6).

No country in **South Asia**, **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, or the **Developed Countries** group features among the 10 countries whose WPS Index score improved or deteriorated the most, which aligns with the trend of stagnating regional scores for these regions.

These findings of stagnating and declining scores since the 2017/18 WPS Index are consistent with broader trends in gender-equality measures. The 2024 SDG Gender Index reported stagnation or declines in gender equality between 2019 and 2022 in 40 percent of countries worldwide, which account for 1.1 billion women and girls.<sup>1</sup> Aid cuts, rising backlash, and failures to advance the WPS Agenda can reverse prior gains and make stagnating and declining trends even worse. Urgent and sustained action is required to ensure that women's status and rights are protected everywhere in the world.

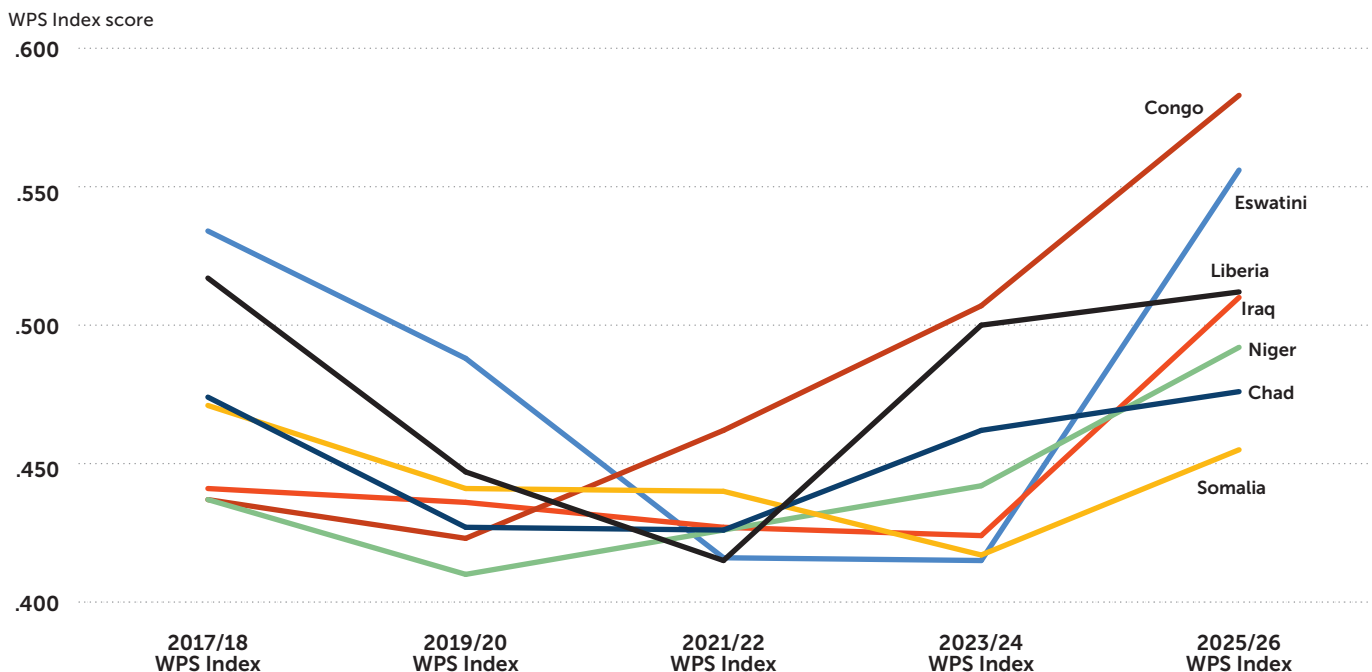
### Divergent paths: Why some countries climb the WPS Index rankings while others lag

How much and how fast a country advances on WPS Index indicators compared with others determines its position in the rankings. And since the WPS Index measures absolute levels of women's status, countries with very low absolute levels need to make large or sustained gains to improve their ranking while countries with higher absolute levels (even countries in the lower quintiles of the rankings) can rise quickly in the rankings with singular large gains across indicators or smaller but steady gains over time. The following country examples illustrate this phenomenon.

Seven countries that rose out of the bottom 10 in the WPS Index rankings on the current WPS Index (**Chad, Congo, Eswatini, Iraq, Liberia, Niger, and Somalia**) demonstrate how the level and pace of progress matter. These countries—all but Eswatini and Liberia are classified as Fragile States—had both upward trends and some sharp increases in their WPS Index scores in recent years that moved them up in the rankings and out of the bottom 10 (figure 4.3). In contrast, the trend for the current bottom 10 countries—most of which are experiencing fragility and conflict—is in the opposite direction, showing mainly stagnation or only slight improvements in WPS Index scores (figure 4.4).

Large shocks affecting a country's performance across indicators may be reflected in the data only after some delay. For instance, **Congo** reached a ceasefire in late 2017 (after the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index was published), so improvements in its score did not become apparent until after the 2019/20 WPS Index was published.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Islamic State was

**FIGURE 4.3** Sharp score increases have helped countries rise from the bottom 10 of the rankings since 2017/18

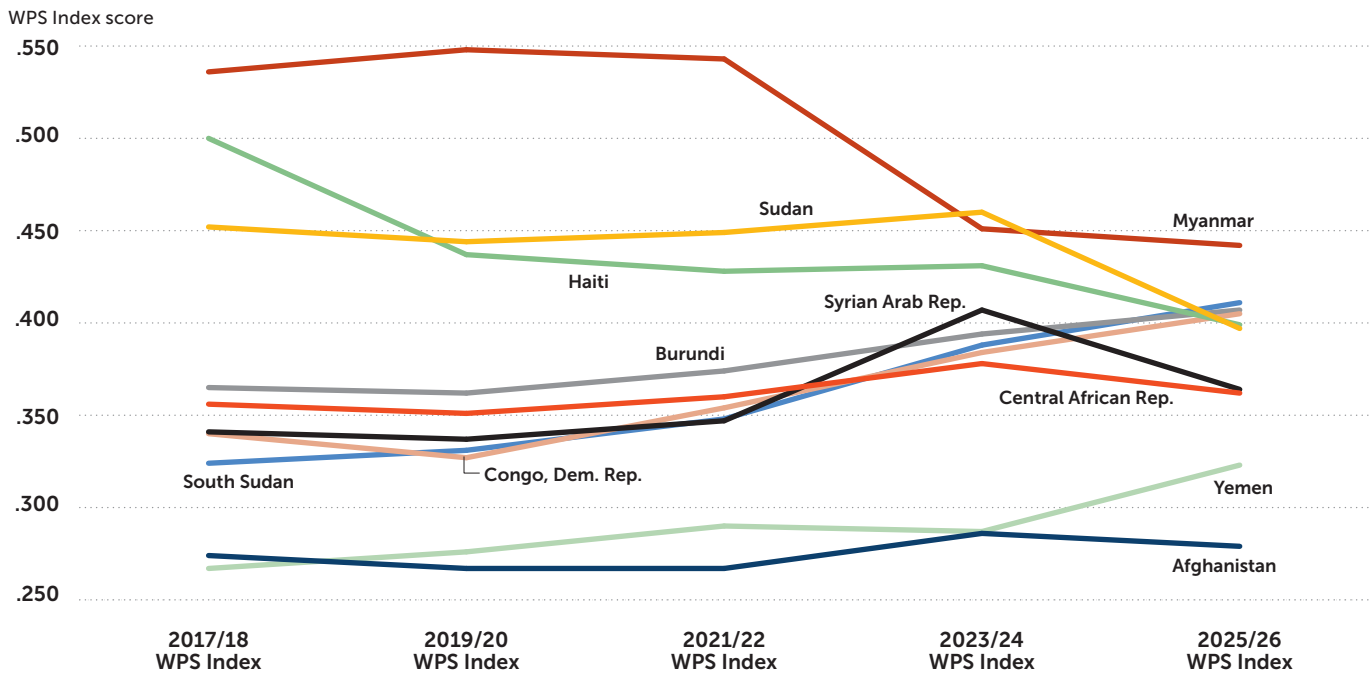


Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.



**FIGURE 4.4** Conversely, scores for countries currently in the bottom 10 on the WPS Index show a stagnating trend since 2017/18



Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

defeated in **Iraq** between late 2017 and mid-2018, with remnants of violence persisting after that, but Iraq's score only began to show improvement after 2023/24.<sup>3</sup> **Niger** had a military coup in July 2023, and the effects have likely not yet been captured by its WPS Index score.<sup>4</sup> The impact of conflict and fragility, as well as country recovery from both, are also variable across contexts and do not affect women's status in the same way everywhere.

Coupled with singular gains, gradual but persistent improvements in women's status can also help countries rise in the rankings, as for **Costa Rica** and **Uruguay**. As noted earlier, both countries had gradual improvements in performance aside from a notable setback that lowered their scores and rankings. However, both countries then recovered strongly, rising into the top quintile on the current WPS Index. The trends in these two countries illustrate how sustained, cumulative improvements provide a strong base that, when paired with recovery after setbacks, can move a country up in the WPS Index ranking.

On the other hand, as mentioned, countries with low initial absolute levels of women's status need to make large and sustained gains to improve their ranking on the WPS Index. Consider **Yemen**. Between the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index and the current one, Yemen improved its overall score by 21 percent, rising from .267 to .323. During that time, it had the second-highest rise in the inclusion dimension score, which rose by almost 55 percent. Some notable improvements included a dramatic decline in the maternal mortality ratio, which fell from 180 deaths per 100,000 live births to 118, and a rise from 37 percent to 52 percent for women who have access to their own mobile phone. The security dimension also improved,

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Countries with very low absolute levels of women's status need dramatic or sustained improvements on indicators, with little to no deterioration, to advance in the WPS Index rankings

as women's proximity to conflict decreased from 92 percent to 71 percent. This may be a result of the United Nations–brokered truce in April 2022 between the two warring parties in the country, which appears to be holding.<sup>5</sup> Although the arrangement is fragile, with tensions ongoing between warring parties and conflict persisting in some parts of the country, the truce has led to less violence, which should lower the percentage of women in proximity to conflict.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these gains, however, **Yemen** has remained the second-worst-ranked country on each WPS Index edition except 2017/18, when it was at the bottom. Women's status was so poor in Yemen to begin with<sup>7</sup> that gains in performance are unable to bridge the gap with other countries in terms of rankings. The only instance so far when Yemen improved in the rankings was in the 2019/20 WPS Index, when another country (**Afghanistan**) performed even worse. Yemen's performance improved on several indicators of women's status on the current WPS Index as well, but since its indicator scores declined in 2023/24, the recent gains have had little impact on its ranking. Thus, countries with very low absolute levels of women's status need dramatic or sustained improvements on indicators, with little to no deterioration, to advance in the WPS Index rankings. This highlights the need for low-performing countries, as well as fragile and conflict-affected countries, to work toward sustained improvements in women's status.

Another way that countries' ranking can shift considerably is when their absolute levels of women's status are already very high. Since differences in performance among top-ranked countries are very narrow, even slight changes on some indicators can lead to large changes in ranking.

Consider **Switzerland**, which has high absolute levels of women's status. Its ranking dropped 17 positions between the 2023/24 WPS Index and the current one, from 2nd to 19th. During this time, Switzerland had slight declines in parliamentary representation, community safety, and access to justice. Most other indicators remained unchanged, and a few others improved slightly, including employment, maternal mortality, and intimate partner violence.

However, even as Switzerland's indicator scores changed little, other countries in the top quintiles made large gains on a single indicator or modest improvements across many indicators, accompanied by little to no deterioration. For instance, **Slovenia** rose from 36th in 2023/24 to 14th currently thanks to improvements across six indicators, including a notable drop in political violence targeting women (from .095 event per 100,000 women to .000), while its performance worsened only slightly in three indicators. **Belgium** rose from 11th on the 2023/24 WPS Index to 7th, reflecting improvements on six indicators, including a notable improvement in community safety (from 56 percent to 63 percent). Similarly, **Norway** climbed from 7th to 3rd in the rankings. Even though Norway's current WPS Index score rose only by .004, small declines in scores for some other top-ranked countries, including **Luxembourg**, **Finland**, and **Sweden**, boosted Norway in the rankings. Because these countries already had high absolute levels of women's status, small score changes altered the rankings relatively quickly.



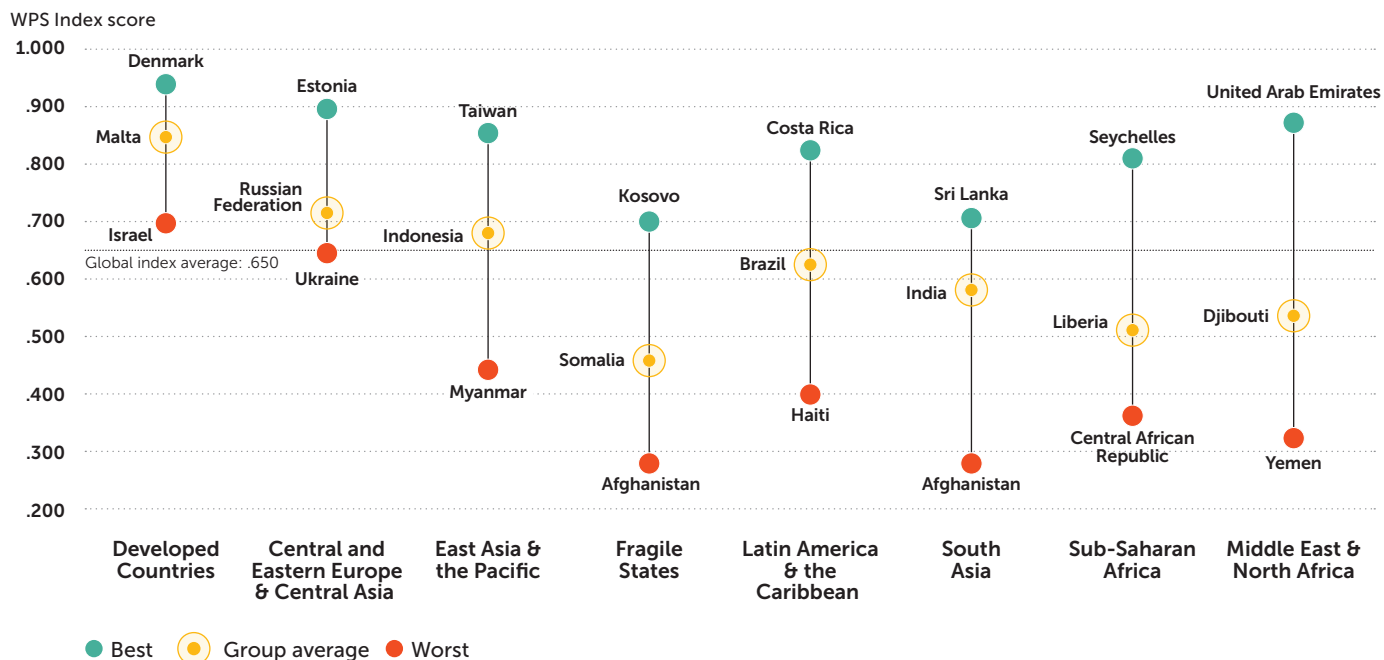
## CHAPTER 5

# Regional scores mostly unchanged since 2023/24 as country gains offset losses

As has been the case for trends in the WPS Index since 2017/18, **most regional scores have stagnated since 2023/24**, reflecting uneven and mostly lackluster country performance, which has also ranged widely within regions (figure 5.1).

Despite a rise in average score on the current WPS Index, the **Fragile States** group remains at the bottom of the regional rankings, as it was on the 2023/24 WPS Index. Its current average score of .458 is a very slight improvement over its .453 score in 2023/24. Women in the Fragile States group have 5.3 years of schooling on average, below the world average of 8.4 years. Nearly one in five women has experienced recent intimate partner violence, almost half report feeling unsafe in their communities, and three in five live in proximity to conflict. Maternal deaths stand at 457 per 100,000 live births, more than double the global average of 188. Leading the rankings in the Fragile States group are **Kosovo, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste**, the only countries classified as Fragile States to rank in the third quintile.

**Kosovo** had the largest improvement in rankings in the group since the 2023/24 WPS Index, advancing 18 positions (from tied for 100th to 82nd). It is one of only two countries classified as Fragile States to make the list of 10 countries with the largest improvement in rankings since the 2023/24 WPS Index. It was also the highest ranked in the Fragile States group for absence of legal discrimination (91.9) and community safety (85 percent). Kosovo's improvements could be reflecting its progress in protecting women's rights through reforms in its legal framework in the past five years.<sup>1</sup> However, despite new legal protections, women continue to face

**FIGURE 5.1** A wide range of performance on the 2025/26 WPS Index across and within regions

Note: Possible WPS Index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. The countries near the yellow dots have a WPS Index score that is closest to the average for the country group or region. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges and appendix 2 for countries in each group and region. Countries in the Fragile States group are also included in their region.

Source: Authors' estimates.

discrimination and violence, accounting for most (81.5 percent) domestic violence victims recorded in the Kosovo Police Inspectorate database. Over half of the women in Kosovo who have ever had a partner have also suffered intimate partner violence at least once since the age of 15.<sup>2</sup> Kosovo is the only country in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia region with less than 25 percent of women employed, and it is among the seven countries in the region where less than half of women have access to their own bank account (47 percent). A 2023 study found that a majority of the jobs published on the government's job platform contained gender stereotypes,<sup>3</sup> and a 2022 study revealed that women were twice as likely as men to experience gender-based discrimination.<sup>4</sup>

**Timor-Leste** slid two positions in the rankings, from 100th to 102nd,<sup>5</sup> which may be explained in part by faster improvement in other countries' performance, such as **El Salvador** (up .125 on the current WPS Index) and **Morocco** (up .031). **Solomon Islands**, which led the Fragile States group along with **Kosovo** on the 2023/24 WPS Index (tied at 100th), dropped to 108th this year, after failing to register gains on any indicators while slipping back on parliamentary representation, maternal mortality, and education as three other countries classified as Fragile States made relative gains. Nonetheless, the Solomon Islands retained its position as the highest scorer on the employment indicator globally, at 90 percent (tied with Burundi after rounding scores).

**Sub-Saharan Africa** again has the second-lowest regional score, at .511. Countries in the region dominate the bottom quintile of the WPS Index, and except for **Seychelles** and **Cabo Verde**, all 44 ranked countries in

the region are in the bottom three quintiles. **Central African Republic** continues to perform the worst in the region, ranking 179th with a score of .362, while **Seychelles**, at 40th, remains the region's top-performing country, with a score of .810. In the region, women have just 5.3 years of schooling on average, only 42 percent own a bank account (compared with the world average of 70 percent), and one in five reported suffering intimate partner violence in the year preceding the survey. Maternal mortality is the second highest of any region, at 437 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

Despite its position near the bottom of the country group rankings, **Sub-Saharan Africa** continued its upward trajectory from the 2023/24 WPS Index. Eight indicators have improved, including employment (from 63 percent to 71 percent), absence of legal discrimination (from 72 to 76 out of 100), and maternal mortality (from 507 deaths per 100,000 live births to 437). Average regional employment of women (71 percent) is higher than the global average (56 percent) and the second highest in the world after the **Developed Countries** group (73 percent). The region's female labor force participation rates could be bolstered by the higher education enrollment for girls in recent years.<sup>6</sup> However, women are disproportionately represented in the informal economy—particularly in the agricultural sector—and make up 94 percent of informal employment.<sup>7</sup> Informal work has several gendered consequences, including lack of safety nets and regulations as well as a large gender wage gap.<sup>8</sup>

Three countries (including one classified as a Fragile State) in the **Sub-Saharan Africa** region were among the dozen most improved since the 2023/24 WPS Index. **Gabon** rose 37 positions (from 131st to 94th), with an almost 15 percent improvement in score. **Eswatini** rose 22 positions (from 170th to 148th), with the largest percentage increase in score for any country, at 34 percent. **Comoros** (a Fragile State) rose 13 positions (148th to 135th), with a 14 percent increase in its WPS Index score. Gabon's reported events of political violence targeting women dropped from 0.085 per 100,000 women to none, while women's parliamentary representation rose from 18 percent to 23 percent. In Eswatini, girls' mean years of schooling jumped from 5.7 years in the 2023/24 WPS Index to 8.5 years, while the maternal mortality ratio improved markedly, from 240 deaths per 100,000 live births to 118. During the same period, Eswatini registered a dramatic decline in reported events of political violence targeting women, from 0.826 per 100,000 women to none. Many factors can contribute to sharp declines in the political violence targeting women indicator, from new policies protecting women to gaps and changes in the data. Eswatini's and Gabon's small population size means that even a single event can significantly influence rates.

On the negative side of the ledger, three countries in the region were among the dozen that have deteriorated the most in rankings since 2023/24. **South Africa** fell 22 positions (91st to 113th) and both **Gambia** (135th to 153rd) and **Rwanda** (103rd to 121st) fell 18 positions. **Eswatini's** performance also stagnated in five indicators across the inclusion and justice dimensions, while proximity to conflict remains at 100 percent, and women's employment declined from 50 percent to 43 percent.

The **Middle East and North Africa** region performs third worst overall, while having the widest range of both scores (difference of .550) and

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Three countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region were among the dozen most improved since the 2023/24 WPS Index: Gabon, Eswatini, and Comoros



East Asia and the Pacific is the best-performing region on community safety, Latin America and the Caribbean on parliamentary representation, and Sub-Saharan Africa on son bias: better even than the Developed Countries group

rankings (difference of 160 positions), with the **United Arab Emirates** scoring .872 (in the 20th position) and **Yemen** scoring .323 (180th). The range between these countries is not surprising. The United Arab Emirates is classified as a high-income country with a very high Human Development Index score, whereas Yemen is classified as a low-income Fragile State with a low Human Development Index score. Correspondingly, mean years of schooling for girls is far higher in the United Arab Emirates, at 13.4, compared with 3.6 in Yemen, and the gap in maternal mortality is enormous, at 3 deaths per 100,000 live births in the United Arab Emirates and 118 in Yemen. While almost all women in the United Arab Emirates have their own mobile phone, only about half of Yemeni women do (52 percent), and less than half feel safe walking alone at night (43 percent). Yemen is embroiled in an escalating conflict that has led to mounting civilian casualties. More than 2.3 million women have been displaced, and some 9.6 million need aid. Conflict exacerbates the barriers women face in accessing basic services such as maternal healthcare, clean water, and education.<sup>9</sup> No women in the United Arab Emirates live in proximity to conflict, while 71 percent of women in Yemen are within 50 kilometers of armed conflict. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, Yemen has made considerable improvements in women's status since 2017/18, despite the devastating impact of war. Robust disaggregated data are also limited for Yemen, partly attributable to conflict and fragility, and these improvements may not yet be reflected in its indicator scores.

The **Developed Countries** group has been the top-performing country group since the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index. It also has the highest average score across 10 indicators, the exceptions being community safety, parliamentary representation, and son bias. **East Asia and the Pacific** performs best on community safety, **Latin America and the Caribbean** on parliamentary representation, and **Sub-Saharan Africa** on son bias. The **Developed Countries** group also has the narrowest range of scores and rankings, with **Denmark** scoring .939 in the 1st position and **Israel** scoring .697 in the 84th. As in previous editions of the WPS Index, Israel is the only country in this group that ranks in the third quintile. Additionally, **South Korea** and **Italy** fell from the first quintile of rankings on the previous WPS Index to the second quintile on the current WPS Index.

The **United States** was one of two Developed Countries in the second quintile in the 2023/24 WPS Index after being in the top quintile on all previous editions of the WPS Index. The United States moved back into the top quintile this year, improving in both ranking (rising from 37th to 31st) and score (from .823 to .840). However, it currently ranks lowest among Developed Countries in the top quintile. The US drop in the 2023/24 WPS Index reflected worsening scores on women's access to justice, community safety, maternal mortality (see box 6.1 in chapter 6), and political violence targeting women.<sup>10</sup> US performance on access to justice and community safety deteriorated again on the current WPS Index, while performance improved on maternal mortality, education, employment, cellphone use, and parliamentary representation.

Recent changes in the **United States** threaten to undo some of this progress. For instance, in early 2025, the US government began dismantling

the Department of Education, including eliminating several staff positions in its Office of Civil Rights, which provided protections against sex- and race-based discrimination and harassment in education.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, Executive Order 11246 was repealed early this year, which had prohibited discrimination on the basis of social identities in the federal workforce, which makes up 20 percent of the country's labor force.<sup>12</sup> These policy changes are likely to affect performance on the education and employment indicators. Access to justice and community safety are likely affected by the announcement that churches, schools, and hospitals are no longer exempt from immigration enforcement activities<sup>13</sup> and by the Justice Department decision in July 2025 that women and girls fleeing human rights violations may no longer qualify for asylum in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

As on the 2023/24 WPS Index, **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia** has the highest average score after the Developed Countries group, led by **Estonia** (ranked 11th). Although one of only three country groups or regions scoring above the global average, as mentioned, its performance has declined for the second consecutive edition of the WPS Index, slipping from .721 in 2023/24 to .715. Two of the 31 ranked countries in the region are classified as Fragile States: **Kosovo** (third quintile) and **Ukraine** (fourth quintile). No countries in the region rank in the bottom quintile.

Each of the remaining regions has one country in the bottom dozen, all of them classified as Fragile States: **Myanmar** in East Asia and the Pacific, **Haiti** in Latin America and the Caribbean, and **Afghanistan** in South Asia. Afghanistan has ranked lowest on the WPS Index since 2019/20.<sup>15</sup> South Asia had no change in its average regional score, but several countries in the region performed poorly. **Pakistan**, although not classified as a Fragile State, ranks 169th (or 13th worst) on the current WPS Index. It ranks second worst in the world for the inclusion dimension (worse than Afghanistan), is the only country in which less than a third of women have their own cellphone, is one of three South Asian countries where women receive less than four years of education on average, and is in the bottom 10 globally for financial inclusion. **Iran** is the worst performer on women's employment in the region, at approximately 15 percent. **Bangladesh** performs the worst in the South Asia region on women's proximity to conflict, at 86 percent, up from 28 percent in the 2023/24 WPS Index. The worsening performance on this indicator reflects the higher number of protests in 2024 that ousted Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian government, which had responded violently to the demonstrations. Several of these protests were in large cities and exposed a large number of women to conflict.

This summary of regional performance since the 2023/24 WPS Index reveals that in most cases improvements in country performance were canceled out by losses, stalling regional and overall performance and even reversing gains in some cases.

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Recent policy changes in the United States related to education, immigration, and discrimination are likely to affect its performance on the education, employment, access to justice, and community safety indicators



## CHAPTER 6

# Dimension performance reveals that women are still being left behind

Countries' performance has ranged widely across WPS Index dimensions over time. Additionally, analysis of country performance on dimensions and their individual indicators for the current WPS Index reveals some encouraging results but largely limited progress. Moreover, variation in dimension performance shows that countries can be high achievers in one dimension but perform poorly in others, demonstrating the importance of multidimensional assessments. These findings reinforce the need for urgent and comprehensive action to preserve existing gains while continuing efforts to improve women's status.

### *In women's own words*

"End[ing] the persecution and political violence [is most urgently needed to improve my life and the lives of my family]."

—Peacebuilder  
in Nicaragua

### **Big gains and big losses: performance on dimensions since 2017/18**

Many of the top global improvers across all three dimensions since 2017/18 are in the Fragile States group and the Sub-Saharan Africa region. However, these two groups, especially the Fragile States group, also include several countries with the steepest declines in performance. Countries in the Middle East and North Africa region experienced some of the sharpest declines across all three dimensions. These trends may help explain the slight improvement in regional scores on the current WPS Index for Sub-Saharan Africa and the Fragile States group, as well as the recent decline in the average regional score for the Middle East and North Africa.

On the *inclusion dimension*, 10 of the 12 most improved countries since the 2017/18 WPS Index are in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the other two are in East Asia and the Pacific (**Myanmar**) and the Middle East and North Africa (**Yemen**). **Eswatini**'s scores showed the largest percentage improvement globally on this dimension since 2017/18, with an almost 56 percent rise. It

was also one of three countries that made it out of the bottom 10 performers on the WPS Index, along with **Chad** (fourth most improved on inclusion) and **Niger** (third most improved). Six of the twelve countries with the largest improvement on the inclusion dimension are classified as Fragile States, with **Yemen** having the second largest percentage increase (55 percent). Among the dozen countries whose inclusion score deteriorated the most, five are in the Middle East and North Africa and four are in Sub-Saharan Africa, offsetting some of the regional gains for Sub-Saharan Africa. The four countries that deteriorated the most on the inclusion dimension are classified as Fragile States, including **Somalia**, which had the largest decline (28 percent).

On the *justice dimension*, eight of the dozen countries with the largest improvement in scores since the 2017/18 WPS Index are also in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, three are in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, and one is in the East Asia and the Pacific region. Half of the dozen countries that improved the most on the justice dimension are classified as Fragile States. The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** had the largest percentage rise, at 54 percent.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, **Afghanistan** deteriorated the most on this dimension, with scores falling by 17.5 percent since the 2017/18 WPS Index, followed by **Nicaragua** (down 13.9 percent). Among the dozen countries with the steepest declines in the justice dimension, three were classified as Fragile States, distributed across several regions. In both the inclusion and the justice dimensions, poor performance is not confined to any one region, though Fragile States are disproportionately represented.

On the *security dimension*, seven of the dozen countries that improved the most since the 2017/18 WPS Index are in the Middle East and North Africa region and three are in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Five of the top dozen performers are classified as Fragile States. **Iraq** has improved the most (up a notable 68 percent), followed by **Bahrain** and **Libya** (both up 60 percent). Of the dozen countries whose performance deteriorated the most, five are classified as Fragile States, three are in Sub-Saharan Africa, and seven are in Latin America and the Caribbean, perhaps explaining some of the decline in the average regional score for the Latin America and the Caribbean. **Ecuador** experienced the largest reversal on the security dimension, with its score falling 52 percent since the 2017/18 WPS Index.

### *In women's own words*

“I am particularly proud to have contributed to the establishment of dialogue groups that allow women, men, and young people from communities affected by conflict to develop more peaceful relationships. From women cross-border traders learning to overcome stereotypes and peacefully resolve tensions to university students discovering alternative ways to manage conflict without resorting to violence, these spaces have helped open up avenues of communication, build solidarity, and lay the foundation for some peace that can lead to more lasting peace.”

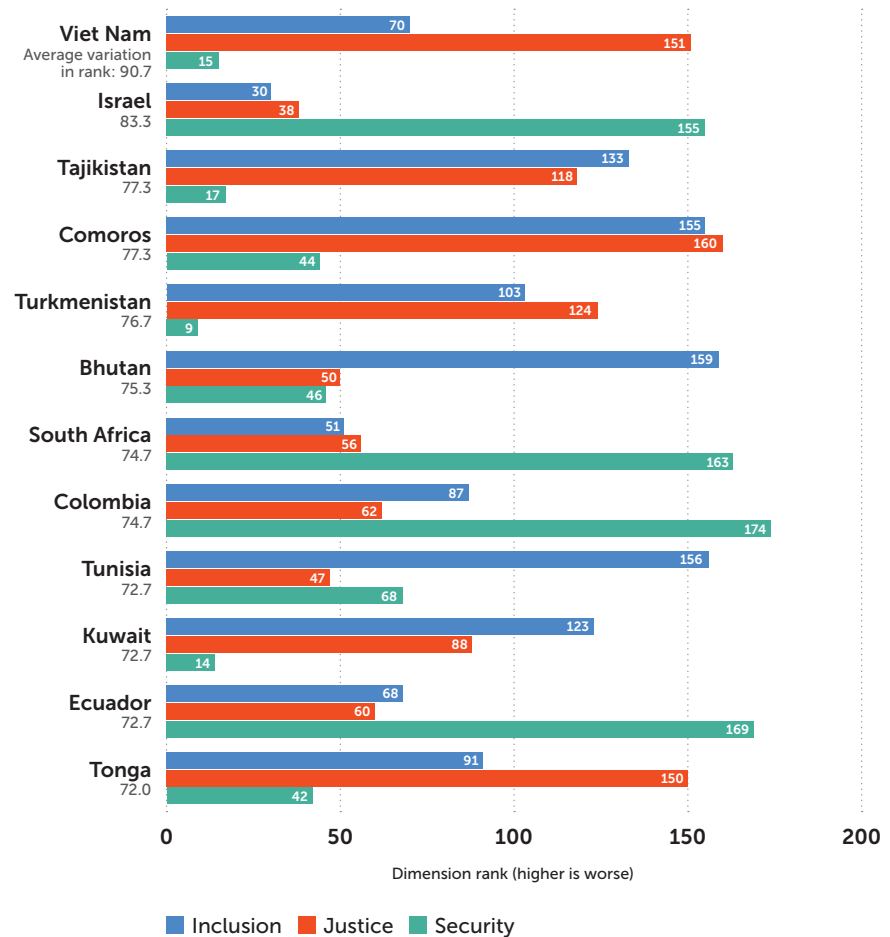
—Peacebuilder in  
Democratic Republic  
of the Congo

### **Variance in results since 2023/24 shows why multidimensional analysis matters**

While most countries continued to perform similarly across the three dimensions of inclusion, justice and security, some performed notably better on one or two dimensions and worse on others.

Of the dozen countries with the largest variation in ranking across dimensions on the current WPS Index (figure 6.1), seven—**Viet Nam**, **Israel**, **Bhutan**, **Colombia**, **Tunisia**, **Ecuador**, and **Tonga**—were also among the dozen with the largest variation on the 2023/24 WPS Index. Viet Nam has risen in ranking since then on the justice dimension (from 154th to 151st), in part because its access to justice score increased from 1.75 to 2.1 while its maternal mortality ratio improved from 124 deaths per 100,000 live births to 48. However, the gap in dimension performance persists, as its inclusion ranking deteriorated (from 67th to 70th) while its security ranking rose (from 24th to 15th).

**FIGURE 6.1** The dozen countries with the largest variation in ranking across dimensions of the 2025/26 WPS Index



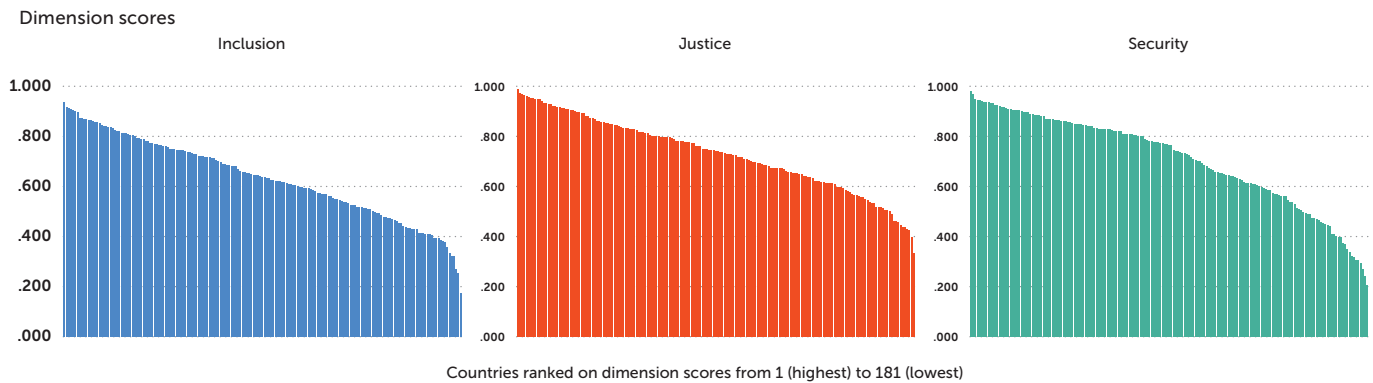
*Note:* Rankings range from 1 to 181, and higher is worse. Countries are ordered from largest to smallest average rank difference between dimensions. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

*Source:* Authors' estimates.

On average across the 181 countries ranked on the current WPS Index, countries scored lowest on the security dimension (.615), followed by the inclusion dimension (.625), and highest on the justice dimension (.713). The inclusion dimension has the largest disparity in scores (steepest decline across the three graphs in figure 6.2), while the justice dimension has more even performance. The wide variation across the inclusion dimension is especially evident among the low scorers, with remarkably low scores for the bottom five countries compared with other poor performers. For instance, the inclusion score for **Madagascar** (.393)—in the bottom dozen for inclusion (at 169th)—is more than twice that of last-place **Yemen** (.175) and 1.5 times that of **Pakistan** (.255), in next to last place. **Iceland** ranks highest globally on the inclusion dimension, with a score of .936, over five times Yemen's score. The security dimension shows the sharpest drop toward the bottom of the range compared with the rest of the distribution, indicating that countries that perform poorly on that dimension perform very poorly relative to other countries.



**FIGURE 6.2** Dimensional scores: Inclusion has the greatest dispersion while security has the sharpest drops at the low end



Note: Possible WPS Index dimension scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

## Indicator performance has improved little since the 2023/24 WPS Index

### Inclusion indicators

*With the exception of some high performers, women's average years of schooling remain alarmingly low.* The global average for the *education indicator* (average number of years of schooling for women ages 25 and older) stands at 8.4 years, four years short of completing secondary education in most countries.<sup>2</sup> The top performers, where women receive over 12 years of schooling on average, are countries classified as high income and with very high Human Development Index rankings.<sup>3</sup> Low-income and low Human Development Index countries rank at the bottom on this indicator, with just over three years of schooling. The **Sub-Saharan Africa** region and the **Fragile States** group score at the bottom, with an average of 5.3 years of schooling. On average, girls in 33 countries receive less than five years of schooling.

The **United States** and **Germany** are tied for the highest average years of schooling, at 14, while **Somalia**, classified as a Fragile State, has the lowest average, at 0.9 year. The Middle East and North Africa region has the widest range of performance on this indicator, from 13.4 years in the **United Arab Emirates** to 0.9 year in Somalia. **Lebanon** is the best performing among the Fragile States group, with roughly 13.1 years of schooling, the only country in that group to place in the top quintile for this indicator.

*Sub-Saharan Africa performs exceedingly well on women's employment, while the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia perform poorly.* The global average for the *employment indicator* (the percentage of women ages 25–64 who are employed) is 56 percent, ranging from 24 percent of women employed in the **Middle East and North Africa** region to 73 percent in the **Developed Countries** group. A close second is **Sub-Saharan Africa**, at 71 percent. **Iceland** is the only country in the Developed Countries group that ranks in the top 10 on women's employment. However, the

### In women's own words

"Many peace processes will not come to fruition without the real participation of youth and women. The partnership of these two groups is not only just, but also contributes to the sustainability of peace."

—Peacebuilder in Afghanistan

*In women's own words*

"The most urgent thing needed to improve my life and that of my family is to achieve economic and livelihood stability. The high cost of living and the lack of stable job opportunities are a significant burden, especially in light of the current situation in the country. Obtaining a stable income, and securing basic services such as education, healthcare, and housing, are of utmost priority to me and my family, because they are a cornerstone to attaining safety and dignity, which enable a person to contribute to their society in a better way."

—Peacebuilder in Yemen

range across countries in the group is narrow, with most countries ranking high on employment even if they are not in the top 10. **Burundi**, classified as a Fragile State, is tied as the highest-ranking country in the world on this indicator, with roughly 90 percent of women employed.<sup>4</sup> Half of the 10 top-ranked countries on this indicator are in Sub-Saharan Africa (**Burundi, Tanzania, Nigeria, Benin, and Togo**), including two classified as Fragile States (Burundi and Nigeria). **São Tomé and Príncipe** is the only country in that region with fewer than a third of women employed.

While high rates of employment are an important indicator of women's status, the global datasets we use do not capture working conditions and unpaid care burdens that women manage (see appendix 1 for details on the data sources we use). For example, highest-ranking **Burundi** has the largest share of women (roughly 95 percent) employed in the informal economy, especially in agriculture. Employment may also not translate into higher standards of living; almost two-thirds of Burundi's population lives below the 2017 poverty line of \$2.15 a day, nearly the same share as eight years ago when the inaugural WPS Index was produced.<sup>5</sup> While most Burundian women work in small-scale farming jobs, men are more likely to work in higher revenue-generating industrial agricultural enterprises.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the concentration of women's employment in the informal sector is evidence of the continuing need to improve women's inclusion, even as women's high employment rates represent gains in their status and social acceptance of women's employment.

The **Middle East and North Africa** is the worst-performing region, with more than three in four women unemployed. Low labor force participation by women reflects a combination of structural and legal barriers—such as slow industrialization, male-dominated oil economies, discriminatory family laws, and lack of childcare or maternity support—that restrict both the supply of and demand for women's labor.<sup>7</sup> These barriers are reinforced by high unemployment among educated women, weak private sector job creation, and persistent patriarchal norms that discourage women's employment. **South Asia** is the second-worst performing region and, along with the Middle East and North Africa, the only region where fewer than half of women are employed (39 percent). Despite some favorable laws, women's low employment in South Asia reflects a lack of supportive infrastructure, such as childcare, eldercare, safe transport, inclusive workplaces, and re-entry opportunities, combined with education gaps, limited access to finance, and restrictive social norms.<sup>8</sup>

*Minor changes in other indicators of inclusion.* The global average for *cellphone use* (percentage of women and girls ages 15 or older who report having a cellphone) increased from 80 percent in the 2023/24 WPS Index to 84 percent. The **Developed Countries** group is the best performing, at 96 percent, and **South Asia** is the worst performing, at roughly 65 percent, up from 55 percent in the 2023/24 WPS Index. In seven countries, less than half of women report having their own cellphone (**Chad, Ethiopia, Niger, Afghanistan, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Pakistan**). As mentioned, Pakistan is the only country in which fewer than a third of women have their own cellphone.

Globally, average *parliamentary representation* (percentage of parliamentary seats held by women) declined slightly, from 26 percent in 2023/24 to 24 percent. The **Latin America and the Caribbean** region performs best, with women filling roughly 33 percent of parliamentary seats on average. **South Asia** is the worst-performing region, at roughly 16 percent, displacing the **Middle East and North Africa**, whose score improved from 15 percent in the 2023/24 WPS Index to 18 percent.

There are limited updates to the *financial inclusion* indicator (percentage of women and girls ages 15 years or older with an account at a financial institution).<sup>9</sup> The **Middle East and North Africa** region performs worst on this indicator, at 28 percent. The average rate for the **Fragile States** group, which was the worst-performing region in the 2023 Index, has remained the same (34 percent). In six countries worldwide, less than 10 percent of women have access to their own bank account: **South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Burundi, Djibouti, and Central African Republic**. South Sudan is the lowest-ranking country globally on this indicator, with only 4 percent of women having access to their own bank account. Eight of the ten bottom-ranking countries on this indicator are classified as Fragile States. The exceptions are **Pakistan**, at 14 percent, and Djibouti, at 9 percent.

### Justice indicators

*Mixed performances on barriers to justice.* The global score on *absence of legal discrimination* (a measure of the differences between men's and women's legal access to economic opportunities, from 0, worst, to 100, best)<sup>10</sup> improved slightly, from 75.7 on the 2023/24 WPS Index to 76.1. Fourteen countries have a perfect score of 100, all except one (**Latvia**) in the Developed Countries group. Seven of the bottom dozen countries on this indicator are classified as Fragile States, and all except one of these Fragile States (**Afghanistan**) are in the **Middle East and North Africa** region, which is the worst-performing region on this indicator on the current WPS Index (as it was on the 2023/24 WPS Index).

Performance ranges widely on the related *access to justice* indicator (an ordinal measure of women's ability to enjoy equal, secure, and effective access to justice, from 0, worst, to 4, best). **Denmark** once again ranks highest on the indicator, with a score of 3.958, more than 40 times higher than bottom-ranking **Nicaragua**, with a score of .097. Nicaragua displaced **Afghanistan**, which was the lowest performer on this indicator in the 2023/24 WPS Index. Nicaragua's score plunged 85 percent from its score of .659 on the 2023/24 WPS Index, a large drop that may reflect the deterioration of judicial independence following the February 2025 constitutional reforms driven by President Daniel Ortega.<sup>11</sup> These included eliminating the separation of powers and positioning the judiciary branch under direct executive influence of the new co-presidency of President Ortega and his wife.<sup>12</sup> Key legal protections have been removed, including references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the prohibition against gender-based wage discrimination.<sup>13</sup> Women face heightened risks, and dissenters are threatened with loss of citizenship.<sup>14</sup> Afghanistan also deteriorated on the access to justice indicator, with its score falling from .372 on the 2023/24 WPS Index to .160.

### In women's own words

"Issues such as having laws to legally protect the administration of justice for women, having women in politics, preventing gender discrimination, having support, and creating a comfortable space for women to discuss various issues without any hindrance [are among those that are most urgently needed to improve my life and the lives of my family"].

—Peacebuilder in Afghanistan

*In women's own words*

"[We need] guarantees that the government will respect the human rights of social activists—guarantees of legal security."

—Peacebuilder in  
El Salvador

Eight of the ten highest-ranking countries on the access to justice indicator are in the **Developed Countries** group, whose average score on this indicator is 3.5. No other region has an average above 2.2. The second-best performing regions are **Latin America and the Caribbean** and **Sub-Saharan Africa**, tied with an average score of 2.2. Latin America and the Caribbean's improved standing may be explained by the almost 5 percent rise in its average score for this indicator from the 2023/24 WPS Index, together with declines in scores for **Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, **East Asia and the Pacific**, and **South Asia**. Countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region also have the widest range of scores on this indicator, with best performing Costa Rica (3.540) scoring 36 times higher than worst-performing Nicaragua (.097).

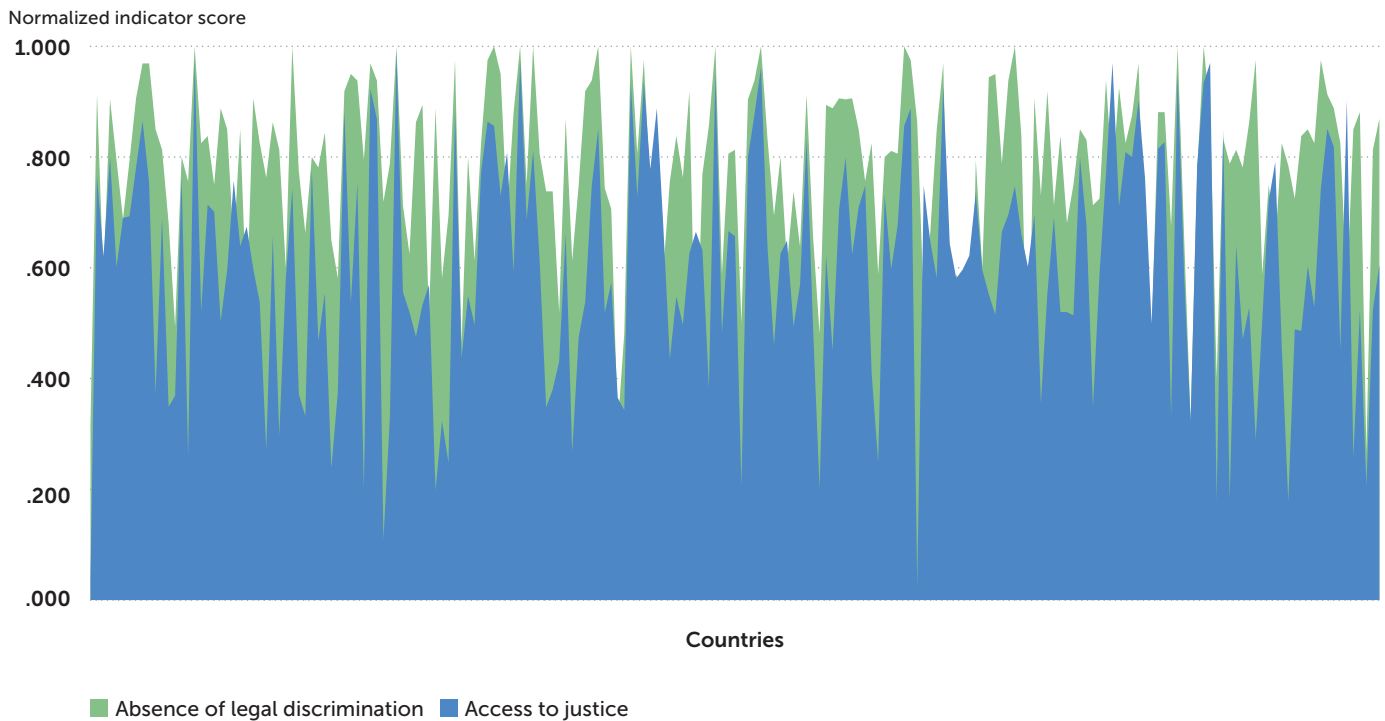
The **Fragile States** group performs worst overall on the access to justice indicator, with a score of 1.8, followed closely by the **Middle East and North Africa**. The average score for the Middle East and North Africa, the lowest ranked region on this indicator in the 2023/24 WPS Index, rose from 1.7 to 1.9. The increase reflects improvements in several countries' scores, including **Egypt** (up 37 percent), **Algeria** (17 percent), **Qatar** (12 percent), **Palestine** (11 percent), **Yemen** (4 percent, and no longer in the bottom 10 countries for this indicator), and **Iraq** (2 percent, and no longer in the bottom 20).

It makes intuitive sense that the absence of legal discrimination and access to justice indicators are strongly connected, since few formal legal protections for women would typically mean that women also have a limited ability to safely pursue justice (and vice versa). Figure 6.3 visualizes the normalized scores of these two justice indicators, with the overlapping patterns reaffirming the positive relation between them. Nonetheless, there are some outlier countries that score high on one indicator and low on the other. As on the 2023/24 WPS Index, **Nicaragua** and **El Salvador** have high scores on the absence of legal discrimination (86.3 and 88.8, respectively) indicator but low scores on access to justice (.097 and .792, respectively).

*Worsening conflict and aid cuts threaten to undo gains in the maternal mortality ratio.* The global average *maternal mortality ratio* (an indicator of mothers' risk of death from a single pregnancy) improved from 212 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023/24 to approximately 188.<sup>15</sup> **Nigeria** has the highest maternal mortality ratio in the world, with 993 deaths per 100,000 live births.

**Belarus** and **Norway** continue to have the lowest maternal mortality ratio, improving to 1 death per 100,000 live births. The **Developed Countries** group performs the best on this indicator, with an average of 10 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. The **United States** has the worst maternal mortality ratio among countries in the Developed Countries group (box 6.1).

The **Fragile States** group has the highest maternal mortality ratio among regions, with an average of 457 deaths per 100,000 live births. Seven of the ten lowest-ranking countries on this indicator are classified as Fragile States, and five of these are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent research

**FIGURE 6.3** Positive relationship between formal and informal barriers to justice, with some outliers

Note: Absence of legal discrimination measures the extent (from 0, worst, to 100, best) to which the laws and regulations differentiate between women and men or protect women's opportunities across 35 aspects of life and work. Access to justice measures the extent (from 0, worst, to 4, best) to which women are able to exercise justice by bringing cases before the court without risks to their personal safety, participating in a free trial, and seeking redress if public authorities violate their rights.

Source: Authors' estimates.

also reaffirms that armed conflict is associated with increases in maternal and child deaths globally.<sup>16</sup> For instance, research focusing on the Tigray region of **Ethiopia** found that maternal outcomes deteriorate severely in rural areas during wartime, likely due to disruptions in healthcare infrastructure.<sup>17</sup>

However, since the 2023/24 WPS Index, maternal mortality ratios have improved for both the **Sub-Saharan Africa** region (down from 507 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births to 437) and the **Fragile States** group (down from 540 to 457). **South Sudan**, which was the worst-performing country on this indicator in the 2023/24 WPS Index, with 1,223 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, has nearly halved that number to 692. South Sudan's improvement may be attributed to the gradual increase in midwife training throughout the country, supported by organizational efforts such as the establishment of the Catholic Health Training Institute in 2010<sup>18</sup> and UNFPA support of mobile health clinics and community outreach programs that provide perinatal care.<sup>19</sup> Additional efforts are ongoing, with the World Health Organization (WHO) and South Sudan's Ministry of Health collaborating in 2024 to develop guidelines and training resources on maternal health for healthcare workers.<sup>20</sup>

Despite substantial progress over the past two decades, the WHO reported that Sub-Saharan Africa, grappling with high rates of poverty and multiple armed conflicts,<sup>21</sup> still accounted for about 70 percent of maternal deaths



### BOX 6.1 The United States has improved its maternal mortality ratio, but recent policy changes threaten to reverse gains

*This is the first time since the 2017/18 WPS Index that the United States has improved its maternal mortality ratio, although it remains the worst performer on this indicator in the Developed Countries group*

The maternal mortality ratio for the United States improved from 21 deaths per 100,000 live births in the 2023/24 WPS Index (2020 data) to 17 (2023 data), a 19 percent reduction. This decline can be attributed to several legislative initiatives that expanded maternal healthcare services.<sup>1</sup>

However, recent policy changes threaten to undo this progress. Early in 2025, federal resources for programs to support women's reproductive health were suspended, including funding for ReproductiveRights.org, which compiled information about healthcare, abortion, and patient rights.<sup>2</sup> The current US administration's cuts to Title X programs<sup>3</sup> have left clinics around the country struggling to stay open.<sup>4</sup> The US government's widespread reductions in the federal workforce included terminating a majority of jobs in the CDC's Division of Reproductive Health, which has collected maternal and infant health data since the 1980s and was responsible for research on racial disparities in maternal mortality trends.<sup>5</sup>

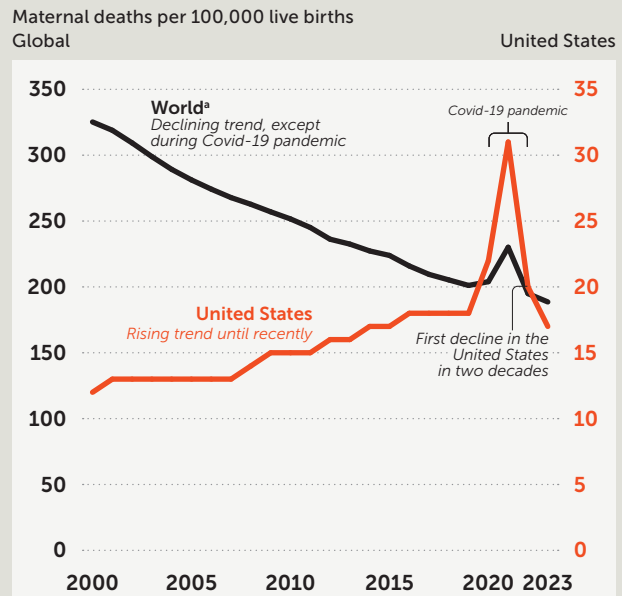
Large racial and ethnic disparities characterize maternal health in the United States. In 2020, the US Women, Peace and Security Index found that maternal mortality ratios were higher for Black women in all 50 states, and a 2024 report found that maternal mortality rates were more than three times higher for Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native women than for White women.<sup>6</sup> Systemic barriers can prevent women of color from accessing affordable and quality healthcare. For example, high income inequality and rising costs lead many pregnant women to forgo healthcare check-ups, resulting in childbirth-related complications. Other recent research finds a 2.5 times greater risk of maternal mortality among Black women than White women.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the recent One Big Beautiful Bill Act cut an estimated \$1.02 trillion from Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program spending, with at least 10.5 million Americans removed from these programs.<sup>8</sup> A recent study found that populations with structural barriers to care experience higher rates of maternal mortality and higher usage of over-the-counter oral contraceptive pills compared with other populations,<sup>9</sup> suggesting that the pill might have reduced preventable maternal morbidity by decreasing the number of unintended pregnancies.<sup>10</sup> The rollback of federal protections for abortion rights through the *Dobbs v. Jackson* Supreme Court decision, coupled with threats to contraceptive access,<sup>11</sup> can be expected to drive up maternal illness and death.

Analysis of the maternal mortality ratio over 2000–2023 reveals that this is the first time in more than two decades that the maternal mortality ratio has declined in the United States. In contrast, the global average declined steadily over that period except during the Covid-19 pandemic (see

figure). The recent decline in the United States has largely restored the maternal mortality ratio to pre-pandemic levels, but it has not improved it significantly.

#### A worsening trend in the annual US maternal mortality ratio contrasts starkly with an improving global trend, 2000–2023



a. Average annual maternal mortality ratio weighted by number of births. Note: The maternal mortality ratio measures mortality and risk, so that declines represent an improvement while increases represent a deterioration. The United States calculates the maternal mortality ratio separately from the World Health Organization (WHO). With the exceptions of 2007 and 2018, the US estimates show a higher maternal mortality ratio than the WHO estimates for the United States.

Source: Estimates by the author and research team based on time series analysis of the maternal mortality ratio indicator from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database> (indicator 3.1.1).

#### Notes

1. The American Rescue Plan of 2021 and the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of March 2024 included funding to expand postpartum coverage and implement initiatives to reduce maternal mortality. In 2022, President Joe Biden signed legislation doubling funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, and in 2024 the Health and Human Services Department announced more than \$550 million in funding for maternal health programs.
2. Center for Reproductive Rights 2025a.
3. These programs guarantee comprehensive family planning and health services such as cancer screening and human papilloma virus vaccination for low-income Americans.
4. Wheeler 2025; Center for Reproductive Rights 2025b.
5. Wheeler 2025.
6. GIWPS 2020 (see figure 3.7); Hill et al. 2025.
7. Akobirshoev et al. 2025.
8. Ives-Ruble and Musheno 2025.
9. The study found that over-the-counter oral contraceptive pills may improve access to contraception for individuals with structural barriers to care, such as women of minority racial/ethnic groups, adolescents, uninsured individuals, and Medicaid recipients.
10. Rodriguez et al. 2025.
11. National Women's Law Center 2025.

worldwide in 2023. Recent maternal mortality data also reveal the detrimental impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, with an estimated 40,000 more deaths in 2021 than in 2020, driven by health complications from Covid-19 and widespread disruptions to maternity services, underscoring the need to maintain essential care during crises such as pandemics.<sup>22</sup> Global maternal mortality ratios began to improve in the two years after the pandemic, returning to the falling trend of earlier years.

Globally, maternal deaths dropped 40 percent between 2000 and 2023, but progress has slowed notably since 2016, with almost one woman dying every two minutes in 2023 from pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications.<sup>23</sup> And now there is a risk of reversals, as deep cuts in humanitarian funding in 2025 are severely undermining maternal and child health services. In many areas, maternal and child health facilities have closed, the number of health workers has declined, and supply chains for lifesaving medicines have been disrupted.

Especially at risk are women in countries that are heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance, such as those classified as Fragile States, where maternal mortality ratios are already high. For instance, a 2025 UN report estimated that the likelihood of maternal death is 400 times greater in **Sub-Saharan Africa** than in **Australia** and **New Zealand**.<sup>24</sup> The highest risks are in countries ranked the worst on the maternal mortality ratio indicator: **Nigeria** (181st), **Chad** (180th), **Central African Republic** (178th tie), **South Sudan** (178th tie), **Liberia** (177th), **Somalia** (176th), and **Afghanistan** (175th). Researchers at Stanford University have estimated that reductions in development assistance to low-resource countries that last five years or longer can reverse 64 percent of the progress in maternal mortality.<sup>25</sup> Health and dignity are not only basic human rights, but they are also central to women's participation and protection under the WPS Agenda. Urgent and sustained action is needed from all countries to preserve and increase the gains in maternal mortality.

### Security indicators

*Despite some improvements, less than two-thirds of women worldwide report feeling safe walking at night in their communities.* Community safety (the percentage of women who report feeling safe walking alone at night in their community) has improved slightly, rising from 64 percent globally on the 2023/24 WPS Index to 66 percent. But that means more than one-third of women feel unsafe walking alone at night in their communities. **Singapore** is the highest-ranking country on this indicator, with 97 percent of women feeling safe walking alone at night, while **Syrian Arab Republic** is the lowest-ranking country at 17 percent—and the only country where fewer than one in four women feels safe walking alone at night.

Among regions, **East Asia and the Pacific** again performs best, with 84 percent of women reporting feeling safe walking in their community at night (compared with 83 percent in the 2023/24 WPS Index), while **Latin America and the Caribbean** again performs worst, at 42 percent (40 percent in 2023/24). **El Salvador** is the only country in the Latin America and the Caribbean region to score above the global average, with 85 percent

#### In women's own words

"Peace and security are collective goals. Our role is not just to enforce the law but to help create an environment where safety, dignity, and justice are accessible to all."

—Peacebuilder in the Philippines

*In women's own words*

What are you most proud of?

“Helping center Syrian women’s voices and lived experiences in conversations often dominated by state actors, men, or international agendas. I’m proud of how we’ve built spaces of solidarity, healing, and political agency for Syrian women journalists and human rights defenders who continue to document, resist, and imagine alternatives, even while carrying deep personal losses and trauma. This work has also taught me that peace isn’t only about formal processes. It’s about who feels heard and who gets to shape the future.”

—Peacebuilder in Syrian Arab Republic

of women reporting that they feel safe walking alone at night. In 16 of 27 countries in the region, more than half the women report feeling unsafe walking alone at night.

In 31 of the 37 countries classified as Fragile States, fewer than two-thirds of women feel safe walking alone at night. In a majority of countries (23) in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, that share shrinks to fewer than half. **Syrian Arab Republic** has the worst performance globally on this indicator, with less than a quarter of women feeling safe walking alone at night. The second-worst performers on the community safety indicator are **South Africa** and **Afghanistan**, at 25 percent each. In Afghanistan, the Taliban continues to restrict women’s mobility, including prohibitions on visiting parks and even health centers.<sup>26</sup>

Community safety is one of the few indicators on which the **Developed Countries** group does not perform best. Its score of 65 percent puts it behind the **East Asia and the Pacific** region, at 84. Nine countries in the Developed Countries group are below the global average of 66 percent: **Israel** (63 percent), **Canada** (63 percent), **Belgium** (63 percent), the **United States** (58 percent), **Malta** (56 percent), **Australia** (52 percent), **Greece** (51 percent), **New Zealand** (47 percent), and **Italy** (44 percent). Just behind the Developed Countries group are the **Middle East and North Africa** and **South Asia** regions, both at just under 65 percent. Eleven countries in the Middle East and North Africa score above the global average on community safety, with more than two-thirds of women feeling safe walking alone at night.<sup>27</sup>

Perceptions of community safety also vary within countries, with vulnerable groups often feeling more unsafe. For instance, a 2024 study for Brazil found that perceptions of safety among women have deteriorated more in rural areas than in urban areas, especially for non-White populations, a finding the study links to an erosion of trust in police services.<sup>28</sup> In the United States, there is a notable racial difference in perceptions of safety, with fewer than half of Black women (46 percent) feeling safe walking alone at night,<sup>29</sup> compared with 58 percent of women overall. Only two-thirds of Black women in the United States believe they would be treated fairly or with respect by local police, and one-fourth report having experienced discriminatory treatment in the past year, higher than that of Black men (one-fifth).

*Political violence targeting women shows little improvement.* Globally, *political violence targeting women* (violent and politically motivated events targeting women)<sup>30</sup> improved from 0.080 event per 100,000 women in the 2023/24 WPS Index to 0.070 event in the current one. While this indicator captures “the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation” in targeting women (physical violence or attempt at physical violence),<sup>31</sup> it does not capture the full scope of political violence targeting women. For instance, it does not include intimidation, threats, or online or technology-facilitated gender-based violence,<sup>32</sup> all of which can have serious implications for women’s safety and their ability to participate in politics and in peace and security efforts.

The **Latin America and the Caribbean** region continues to have the highest rate of political violence targeting women, despite a reduction from 0.381 event per 100,000 women on the 2023/24 WPS Index to 0.338 on the current one. The region also has the second-highest share of women living in proximity to conflict (up from 44 percent to 47 percent). When considered along with the region's performance at the bottom of the regional rankings on community safety, these results reinforce the relationship between feelings of safety at the local level and instability at the societal level. The second-worst performing region on this indicator is the **Fragile States** group, at 0.212 event per 100,000 women. The **Middle East and North Africa** and **Sub-Saharan Africa** regions performed slightly better, at roughly 0.130 event per 100,000 women. The other country groups have an average rate ranging from 0.006 event per 100,000 women (**Developed Countries**) to roughly 0.020 for three regions (**Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, **East Asia and the Pacific**, and **South Asia**).

Seven of the ten bottom-ranking countries on the political violence targeting women indicator are in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and only one of those (**Haiti**) is classified as a Fragile State. **Trinidad and Tobago** is the worst-performing country globally on this indicator, with 3.017 events per 100,000 women. The next lowest ranked country is Belize, with 1.452 events, which makes Trinidad and Tobago an outlier on this indicator. Trinidad and Tobago has a history of high rates of political violence targeting women, with 8 events per 100,000 women in the 2019/20 WPS Index, rising nearly fourfold to 23 events in the 2023/24 WPS Index. That large increase may be related to the island country's very small population, intensifying gang violence that led the government to declare a state of emergency in December 2024, and the second-highest score worldwide on a measure of the geographic diffusion of conflict.<sup>33</sup>

Eleven countries in the Fragile States group have 0.000 reported events of political violence targeting women, a hopeful sign that such violence can be controlled even in contexts of fragility and conflict. **Kosovo's** rate of 0.000 events may reflect targeted interventions and women's leadership.<sup>34</sup> For instance, discussions on political violence targeting women and its consequences for women's representation were spurred in Kosovo by initiatives such as the EmPOWER Local Women Politicians Program, a capacity-building program sponsored by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe that offers leadership workshops, civic engagement opportunities, and cross-party collaboration for women in politics. As a result of such efforts, women parliamentarians led their fellow lawmakers in developing and endorsing an official declaration in 2024 that calls for accountability and the safeguarding of women's full participation in electoral spheres.<sup>35</sup>

Despite these positive signs, women in 94 countries are still subjected to political violence. They range from the **United Kingdom**, with 0.003 event per 100,000 women, to five countries (**Palestine**, **Cameroon**, **Jamaica**, **Belize**, and **Trinidad and Tobago**) where events exceed 1 per 100,000 women.

### *In women's own words*

"One of the most meaningful aspects of my work is the opportunity to serve not just as an enforcer of the law, but as a bridge between the police organization and the communities we protect. Through initiatives such as community outreach programs, public safety dialogues, and conflict mediation, I have seen firsthand how open communication and genuine partnership can prevent violence, resolve disputes, and promote lasting peace."

—Peacebuilder in the Philippines

*In women's own words*

"The greatest need in Haiti is security. And, with it, the dismantling of the armed gangs that sow terror. Then there is access to economic and social rights, especially for women and girls who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods."

—Peacebuilder in Haiti

Finally, political violence targeting women does not affect all women in the same way or to the same degree, and a lack of reporting does not necessarily mean a lack of occurrence. The **United States** is an example of how these limitations can affect our understanding of this indicator. The country's score on this indicator fell from 0.025 event per 100,000 women in the 2023/24 WPS Index to 0.006 in the current one. However, a recent study found high levels of political violence targeting women during the 2024 US election cycle, with Black women 7 times more likely to be targeted by hate speech than Black men, 3 times more likely than White women, and 18 times more likely than White men.<sup>36</sup>





## CHAPTER 7

# Conclusion: From stagnation to possibility

This fifth edition of the WPS Index confirms what women's movements have long asserted: women's status remains persistently low worldwide. No country achieved a perfect score, regional averages are stagnating or declining, and risk of reversal is widening amid shrinking resources and growing backlash. Yet our results also show pathways forward. Some of the steepest gains since the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index have been in fragile and conflict-affected states, underscoring that even in the most difficult contexts, progress is possible—when women's leadership, civil society, and committed governments work together. The WPS Index also shows a strong, clear correlation between the well-being of women and the well-being of nations, further reinforcing the need to invest in women and girls.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 30 years since adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, governments, international institutions, and advocates must not only defend past gains but also urgently expand investment in the WPS Agenda. Table 7.1 provides a starting point that stakeholders can use to understand the areas of women's status where countries are doing well, where they are stagnating, and where they are performing especially poorly.

Improving women's status requires more than a starting point, though. It entails grappling with entrenched power dynamics such as colonial legacies and elite capture that continue to shape women's experiences of conflict and exclusion. Needed actions include addressing resource allocation and exploitation, building and harnessing political will to protect women's rights, centering women's leadership, amplifying local voices in

*In women's own words*

"Peace is not only the absence of war, but it also means the presence of justice, prosperity, and respect for human rights."

—Peacebuilder in the Philippines

peacebuilding, and strengthening accountability for commitments, including through monitoring and evaluation.

Progress also depends on broadening the original scope of WPS practice: integrating men and masculinities into peace and prevention efforts; grounding policies in intersectional and multidimensional analysis to address the realities faced by women of color, rural women, displaced populations, and others at the margins; and embracing cross-cutting solutions that connect women's security to climate justice, economic development, and social cohesion.

The WPS Index reaffirms that where women are safe, included, and treated justly, societies are more peaceful, resilient, and prosperous. At a time of mounting crises, this agenda is not optional—it is essential. Stakeholders at every level must act urgently and in solidarity to ensure that women everywhere can live, lead, and thrive in dignity.

**TABLE 7.1** Changes in country performance on the WPS Index and its dimensions from 2023/24 to 2025/26

COUNTRY	WPS INDEX		INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
	RANK	SCORE	Education	Financial inclusion	Employment	Cellphone use	Parliamentary representation	Absence of legal discrimination	Access to justice	Maternal mortality	Son bias	Intimate partner violence	Community safety	Political violence targeting women	Proximity to conflict
Afghanistan	181														
Albania	68														
Algeria	123														
Angola	132														
Argentina	47														
Armenia	56														
Australia	11														
Austria	9														
Azerbaijan	111														
Bahrain	55														
Bangladesh	154														
Barbados	42														
Belarus	63														
Belgium	7														
Belize	104														
Benin	137														
Bhutan	99														
Bolivia	80														
Bosnia and Herzegovina	59														
Botswana	108														
Brazil	119														
Bulgaria	38														
Burkina Faso	160														
Burundi	174														
Cabo Verde	62														
Cambodia	104														
Cameroon	171														
Canada	16														
Central African Republic	179														
Chad	165														
Chile	63														
China	89														
Colombia	148														
Comoros	134														
Congo	139														
Costa Rica	34														
Côte d'Ivoire	136														
Croatia	48														
Cyprus	52														
Czechia	32														
Democratic Republic of the Congo	175														
Denmark	1														
Djibouti	145														
Dominican Republic	97														
Ecuador	127														
Egypt	125														
El Salvador	87														
Estonia	11														
Eswatini	147														

**TABLE 7.1** Changes in country performance on the WPS Index and its dimensions from 2023/24 to 2025/26 (continued)

COUNTRY	WPS INDEX		INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
	RANK	SCORE	Education	Financial inclusion	Employment	Cellphone use	Parliamentary representation	Absence of legal discrimination	Access to justice	Maternal mortality	Son bias	Intimate partner violence	Community safety	Political violence targeting women	Proximity to conflict
Ethiopia	156														
Fiji	68														
Finland	5														
France	23														
Gabon	94														
Gambia	152														
Georgia	45														
Germany	21														
Ghana	117														
Greece	60														
Guatemala	143														
Guinea	153														
Guinea-Bissau	159														
Guyana	52														
Haiti	176														
Honduras	143														
Hong Kong	41														
Hungary	32														
Iceland	2														
India	130														
Indonesia	96														
Iran	128														
Iraq	158														
Ireland	13														
Israel	84														
Italy	39														
Jamaica	79														
Japan	22														
Jordan	88														
Kazakhstan	72														
Kenya	151														
Kosovo	82														
Kuwait	70														
Kyrgyzstan	84														
Lao PDR	83														
Latvia	17														
Lebanon	140														
Lesotho	126														
Liberia	157														
Libya	128														
Lithuania	15														
Luxembourg	6														
Madagascar	168														
Malawi	149														
Malaysia	67														
Maldives	78														
Mali	164														
Malta	30														
Mauritania	166														
Mauritius	94														

**TABLE 7.1** Changes in country performance on the WPS Index and its dimensions from 2023/24 to 2025/26 *(continued)*

COUNTRY	WPS INDEX		INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
	RANK	SCORE	Education	Financial inclusion	Employment	Cellphone use	Parliamentary representation	Absence of legal discrimination	Access to justice	Maternal mortality	Son bias	Intimate partner violence	Community safety	Political violence targeting women	Proximity to conflict
Mexico	146														
Moldova	36														
Mongolia	44														
Montenegro	61														
Morocco	102														
Mozambique	150														
Myanmar	172														
Namibia	128														
Nepal	120														
Netherlands	8														
New Zealand	9														
Nicaragua	107														
Niger	163														
Nigeria	162														
North Macedonia	49														
Norway	3														
Oman	58														
Pakistan	169														
Palestine	167														
Panama	86														
Papua New Guinea	160														
Paraguay	54														
Peru	80														
Philippines	130														
Poland	27														
Portugal	26														
Puerto Rico	76														
Qatar	70														
Romania	43														
Russian Federation	75														
Rwanda	121														
Samoa	89														
São Tomé and Príncipe	124														
Saudi Arabia	63														
Senegal	110														
Serbia	29														
Seychelles	40														
Sierra Leone	132														
Singapore	17														
Slovakia	46														
Slovenia	14														
Solomon Islands	108														
Somalia	170														
South Africa	113														
South Korea	37														
South Sudan	173														
Spain	25														
Sri Lanka	77														
Sudan	177														
Suriname	51														



**TABLE 7.1** Changes in country performance on the WPS Index and its dimensions from 2023/24 to 2025/26 (continued)

COUNTRY	WPS INDEX		INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
	RANK	SCORE	Education	Financial inclusion	Employment	Cellphone use	Parliamentary representation	Absence of legal discrimination	Access to justice	Maternal mortality	Son bias	Intimate partner violence	Community safety	Political violence targeting women	Proximity to conflict
Sweden	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	19	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Syrian Arab Republic	178	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
Taiwan	27	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
Tajikistan	89	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tanzania	121	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Thailand	57	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Timor-Leste	102	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●
Togo	142	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tonga	89	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●
Trinidad and Tobago	89	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tunisia	100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Türkiye	106	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Turkmenistan	74	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
Uganda	137	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ukraine	116	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
United Arab Emirates	20	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
United Kingdom	23	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
United States	31	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Uruguay	35	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Uzbekistan	98	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
Vanuatu	115	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●
Venezuela	118	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Viet Nam	73	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
Yemen	180	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● <sup>a</sup>	●	●	●
Zambia	141	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Zimbabwe	134	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

a. Based on an imputed value for 2025.

Note: Traffic lights indicate the direction and magnitude of change between the indicated periods for each WPS Index indicator. Green lights (●) indicate an improvement of at least 5 percent, yellow lights (●) indicate change of less than 5 percent or that the country continued to have the best possible value, and red lights (●) indicate a deterioration of at least 5 percent. See statistical table 1 for detailed scores and date ranges. Five countries ranked in the 2025/26 WPS Index are not displayed here because they were excluded from the 2023/24 WPS Index based on data and imputation criteria (see appendix 1): Federated States of Micronesia, Grenada, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Palau.

Source: Authors.



# Statistical table and appendixes

**STATISTICAL TABLE 1** Country performance and ranking on the Women, Peace and Security Index and indicators

			INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
WPS Index rank 2025/ 26	Country	WPS Index score 2025/ 26	Education	Financial	Employment	Cellphone	Parliamentary	Absence of legal	Access to	Maternal	Son bias	Intimate	Community	Political	
			(years)	inclusion	(%)	use	representation	discrimination	justice	mortality	(number	partner	safety	violence	targeting
			2019– 2023 <sup>a</sup>	2021– 2022 <sup>a</sup>	2020– 2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2025	(score)	(score)	(deaths per 100,000 live births)	of sons born per 100 girls)	(%)	(events per 100,000 women)	to conflict (%)	
			2023 <sup>a</sup>	2022 <sup>a</sup>	2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2025	2023	2024	2023	2024	2018	2022– 2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2023– 2024 <sup>a</sup>
TOP QUINTILE															
1	Denmark	.939	13.2	100.0	77.9	100.0	43.6	100.0	4.0	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.6	3.3	85.0	0.000	0.0
2	Iceland	.932	13.9	100.0	83.7	100.0	46.0	100.0	3.4	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.9	2.8	82.0	0.000	0.0
3	Norway	.924	13.1	100.0	78.6	100.0	44.4	96.9	3.7	1.0 <sup>b</sup>	106.1	4.4	86.0	0.000	0.0
3	Sweden	.924	12.8	100.0	82.2	100.0	45.0	100.0	3.7	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.6	6.3	74.0	0.000	0.0
5	Finland	.921	13.1	99.1	78.4	100.0	45.5	97.5	3.5	8.0	105.2	8.1	78.0	0.000	0.0
6	Luxembourg	.918	12.8 <sup>c</sup>	98.2 <sup>d</sup>	74.4	93.0	35.0	100.0	3.8	11.0	105.3	3.5	86.0	0.000	0.0
7	Belgium	.912	12.3	98.7	71.6	95.0	43.1	100.0	3.9	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	104.9	4.8	63.0	0.000	0.0
8	Netherlands	.905	12.4	99.5	79.5	95.0	39.6	100.0	3.4	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.3	5.1	69.0	0.000	0.0
9	Austria	.898	12.0	100.0	74.7	95.0	38.7	96.9	3.0	6.0	105.5	3.6	82.0	0.000	0.0
9	New Zealand	.898	12.9	99.2	79.5	95.0	45.5	97.5	3.6	7.0	105.3	4.2	47.0	0.000	0.0
11	Australia	.896	12.9	100.0	76.5	95.0	44.9	96.9	3.5	2.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.6	2.9	52.0	0.000	0.0
11	Estonia	.896	13.8	99.6	82.5	100.0	28.7	97.5	3.5	5.0	106.1	4.2	75.0	0.000	0.0
13	Ireland	.891	11.9 <sup>e</sup>	99.5	75.8	95.0	30.3	100.0	3.7	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.6	3.3	68.0	0.000	0.0
14	Slovenia	.889	12.8	98.2	77.4	97.0	30.0	96.9	3.6	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	106.3	3.4	79.0	0.000	0.0
15	Lithuania	.887	13.6	90.4	80.4	100.0	28.4	93.8	3.5	8.0	105.2	5.2	65.0	0.000	0.0
16	Canada	.885	13.9	99.5	75.5	88.0	36.0	100.0	3.0	12.0	105.5	2.6	63.0	0.000	0.0
17	Latvia	.884	13.6	97.6	77.8	100.0	31.0	100.0	3.8	19.0	106.3	6.3	65.0	0.000	0.0

WPS Index rank 2025/26		WPS Index score 2025/26	INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
			Education (years) 2019–2023 <sup>a</sup>	Financial inclusion (%) 2021–2022 <sup>a</sup>	Employment (%) 2020–2024 <sup>a</sup>	Cellphone use (%) 2024	Parliamentary representation (%) 2025	Absence of legal discrimination (score) 2023	Access to justice (score) 2024	Maternal mortality (deaths per 100,000 live births) 2023	Son bias (number of sons born per 100 girls) 2024	Intimate partner violence (%) 2018	Community safety (%) 2022–2024 <sup>a</sup>	Political violence targeting women (events per 100,000 women) 2024	Proximity to conflict (%) 2023–2024 <sup>a</sup>
Country															
17	Singapore	.884	11.7	96.9	76.6	100.0	29.6	82.5	3.2	6.0	106.0	2.4	97.0	0.000	0.0
19	Switzerland	.877	13.5	99.0	80.1	91.0	37.8	88.1	3.9	5.0	105.1	1.7	84.0	0.022	0.0
20	United Arab Emirates	.872	13.4	86.7	59.0	100.0	50.0	82.5	2.1	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	104.5	8.2 <sup>f</sup>	91.0	0.000	0.0
21	Germany	.869	14.0	100.0	78.5	96.0	32.6	100.0	3.9	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.6	5.1 <sup>f</sup>	78.0	0.016	0.0
22	Japan	.866	12.5	98.8	78.6	92.0	19.0	78.8	3.6	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.1	3.9	71.0	0.000	0.0
23	France	.864	11.4	100.0	74.1	96.0	36.5	100.0	3.4	7.0	105.0	5.0	70.0	0.006	0.0
23	United Kingdom	.864	13.6	99.9	75.8	95.0	34.7	97.5	3.0	8.0	105.5	4.2	73.0	0.003	0.0
25	Spain	.862	10.5	97.5	69.0	98.0	43.5	100.0	3.8	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	106.5	2.9	75.0	0.004	0.0
26	Portugal	.861	9.6	90.2	78.6	94.0	34.8	100.0	3.0	15.0	105.7	4.4	68.0	0.000	0.0
27	Poland	.854	13.3	95.7	74.5	95.0	29.1	93.8	2.8	2.0 <sup>b</sup>	106.1	3.1	60.0	0.000	0.0
27	Taiwan	.854	10.3 <sup>f</sup>	93.6	65.6	95.0	41.6 <sup>g</sup>	83.3 <sup>f</sup>	3.4	13.0 <sup>h</sup>	106.7	6.5 <sup>f</sup>	82.0	0.000	0.0
29	Serbia	.844	11.0	89.8	71.5	93.0	37.2	93.8	3.1	11.0	106.9	3.9	69.0	0.000	0.0
30	Malta	.841	12.0	95.3	76.1	96.0	29.1	91.3	3.3	8.0	106.8	4.0	56.0	0.000	0.0
31	United States	.840	14.0	96.8	71.2	99.0	28.3	91.3	3.4	17.0	104.9	6.0	58.0	0.006	0.0
32	Czechia	.832	12.7	93.4	79.3	97.0	24.3	93.8	3.5	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.4	4.1	70.0	0.018	0.0
32	Hungary	.832	12.1	86.9	80.1	96.0	15.2	93.8	3.0	12.0	105.9	5.7	65.0	0.000	0.0
34	Costa Rica	.824	8.9	61.1	55.9	94.0	49.1	91.9	3.5	24.0	104.6	7.2	44.0	0.000	0.0
35	Uruguay	.822	10.8	75.7	71.8	96.0	29.2	88.8	3.3	15.0	105.5	4.3	40.0	0.000	0.0
36	Moldova	.821	11.9	62.9	78.1	90.0	40.0	90.6	2.8	19.0	106.2	9.1	58.0	0.000	0.0
SECOND QUINTILE															
37	South Korea	.815	12.1 <sup>a</sup>	98.7	67.8	96.0	20.3	88.1	3.3	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.9	8.0	72.0	0.004	0.0
38	Bulgaria	.814	11.5	84.3	76.9	91.0	21.3	90.6	2.4	6.0	106.0	5.9	64.0	0.000	0.0
39	Italy	.811	10.6	97.1	60.1	99.0	33.9	97.5	3.7	6.0	105.9	3.5	44.0	0.010	0.0
40	Seychelles	.810	11.0 <sup>i</sup>	76.5 <sup>f</sup>	77.9	87.3 <sup>f</sup>	28.6	76.3	3.9	42.0	103.6	10.2 <sup>f</sup>	58.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
41	Hong Kong	.809	12.0	98.2	67.7	98.0	18.9 <sup>j</sup>	91.9	2.2	29.5 <sup>f</sup>	107.7	2.5	92.0	0.000	0.0
42	Barbados	.807	10.4 <sup>c</sup>	83.6 <sup>f</sup>	76.7	93.7 <sup>f</sup>	29.4	80.0	3.1	35.0	103.5	6.2 <sup>f</sup>	56.4 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
43	Romania	.801	11.3	65.7	63.5	95.0	21.7	90.6	2.8	12.0	105.6	6.9	59.0	0.000	0.0
44	Mongolia	.799	9.9	99.0	63.4	99.0	25.4	90.6	2.5	41.0	104.4	11.5	46.0	0.000	0.0
45	Georgia	.798	12.8	70.7	63.9	96.0	22.0	88.1	2.4	20.0	106.6	2.9	79.0	0.000	10.6
46	Slovakia	.797	12.9	94.0	77.1	97.0	23.3	87.5	3.2	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.5	5.9	58.0	0.035	0.0
47	Argentina	.791	11.4	73.8	67.3	91.0	43.2	79.4	2.8	33.0	105.1	4.5	41.0	0.004	0.0
48	Croatia	.788	11.9 <sup>k</sup>	90.0	73.7	97.0	33.1	93.8	3.0	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	106.0	4.0	69.0	0.150	0.0
49	Grenada	.787	9.3 <sup>l</sup>	77.1 <sup>f</sup>	70.4	92.5 <sup>f</sup>	31.0	80.6	2.4 <sup>f</sup>	48.0	103.9	7.8	60.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
49	North Macedonia	.787	9.6	79.9	56.2	94.0	39.2	85.0	2.3	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	107.6	4.2	68.0	0.000	0.0
51	Suriname	.779	9.2	70.9 <sup>f</sup>	53.9 <sup>m</sup>	91.5 <sup>f</sup>	31.4	76.9	3.1	84.0	104.0	7.7	63.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
52	Cyprus	.770	12.4	92.7	76.4	100.0	14.3	96.9	3.7	14.0	106.5	3.1	59.0	0.148	0.0
52	Guyana	.770	8.6	70.9 <sup>f</sup>	42.4 <sup>n</sup>	91.5 <sup>f</sup>	39.4	86.9	2.6	75.0	103.7	10.5	63.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
54	Paraguay	.768	8.9	55.3	66.2	94.0	23.2	94.4	2.2	58.0	105.0	5.5	44.0	0.000	0.0
55	Bahrain	.765	12.1	75.4 <sup>d</sup>	48.4 <sup>o</sup>	100.0	22.5	68.1	1.4	17.0	103.8	8.2 <sup>f</sup>	87.0	0.000	0.0
56	Armenia	.762	11.3	52.2	62.4	94.0	38.3	90.6	3.1	19.0	108.3	4.6	79.0	0.000	42.1
57	Thailand	.761	8.9	92.7	76.5	90.0	20.4	78.1	1.9	34.0	106.4	9.3	59.0	0.000	2.8
58	Oman	.755	12.1	63.5 <sup>p</sup>	45.6	100.0	10.2	46.3	2.6	13.0	104.4	8.2 <sup>f</sup>	90.0	0.000	0.0
59	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.753	10.3	70.4	51.6	88.0	15.8	85.0	2.4	6.0	106.7	3.4	62.0	0.000	0.0
60	Greece	.752	11.1	93.4	61.9	92.0	23.3	100.0	3.2	5.0	106.4	5.1	51.0	0.097	0.0
61	Montenegro	.743	12.2 <sup>a</sup>	67.6 <sup>d</sup>	63.1	94.0	27.2	85.0	2.8	6.0	106.7	4.4	85.0	0.302	0.0
62	Cabo Verde	.741	5.8 <sup>q</sup>	54.8 <sup>f</sup>	58.4 <sup>n</sup>	71.0 <sup>f</sup>	44.4	86.3	2.6	40.0	103.3	10.9	58.0 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0

WPS Index rank 2025/ 26	Country	WPS Index score 2025/ 26	INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
			Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (score)	Access to justice (score)	Maternal mortality (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Son bias (number of sons born per 100 girls)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Community safety (%)	Political violence targeting women (events per 100,000 women)	Proximity to conflict (%)
			2019– 2023 <sup>a</sup>	2021– 2022 <sup>a</sup>	2020– 2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2025	2023	2024	2023	2024	2018	2022– 2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2023– 2024 <sup>a</sup>
63	Belarus	.739	12.1	81.3 <sup>d</sup>	80.8	88.0 <sup>n</sup>	32.7	75.6	1.0	1.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.9	6.3	56.0 <sup>n</sup>	0.021	0.0
63	Chile	.739	11.2 <sup>e</sup>	86.6	64.0	96.0	32.8	80.0	3.1	10.0	104.3	5.8	34.0	0.101	0.0
63	Palau	.739	13.3 <sup>l</sup>	82.2 <sup>f</sup>	74.5	95.0 <sup>f</sup>	19.4	56.3	2.4 <sup>f</sup>	89.0	107.7	13.8	74.9 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
63	Saudi Arabia	.739	10.7	63.5	54.5 <sup>f</sup>	100.0	19.9	71.3	1.4	7.0	105.1	8.2 <sup>f</sup>	87.0	0.007	5.1
67	Malaysia	.738	11.0	87.5	60.6	94.0	14.0	60.6	2.6	26.0	106.5	7.4 <sup>f</sup>	36.0	0.000	0.0
68	Albania	.731	9.9 <sup>c</sup>	45.7	70.4	92.0	35.7	91.3	3.1	7.0	106.8	6.2	60.0	0.071	0.0
68	Fiji	.731	10.4	75.9 <sup>f</sup>	44.4 <sup>m</sup>	93.9 <sup>f</sup>	9.1	82.5	3.1	30.0	107.1	23.2	77.9 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
70	Kuwait	.723	8.4 <sup>e</sup>	73.5 <sup>d</sup>	40.0 <sup>r</sup>	100.0	3.1 <sup>s</sup>	38.1	2.7	8.0	104.7	8.2 <sup>f</sup>	84.0	0.000	0.0
70	Qatar	.723	12.7	61.6 <sup>p</sup>	65.5	91.9 <sup>f</sup>	4.4	35.6	2.4	4.0 <sup>b</sup>	104.1	8.2 <sup>f</sup>	64.5 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
72	Kazakhstan	.722	12.6 <sup>e</sup>	83.6	75.3 <sup>r</sup>	91.0	18.9	75.6	1.7	10.0	106.4	6.0	60.0	0.047	0.0
THIRD QUINTILE															
73	Viet Nam	.721	8.5	52.8	82.6	98.0	31.4	88.1	2.1	48.0	110.6	9.5	86.0	0.000	0.0
74	Turkmenistan	.720	10.8	35.5 <sup>d</sup>	57.5 <sup>f</sup>	89.0 <sup>n</sup>	25.6	78.5 <sup>f</sup>	0.7	5.0	106.7	8.4 <sup>f</sup>	91.0 <sup>n</sup>	0.000	0.0
75	Russian Federation	.718	12.5	90.1	77.1	100.0	17.0	73.1	1.4	9.0	105.7	6.1 <sup>f</sup>	61.0	0.030	25.3
76	Puerto Rico	.707	13.2	66.1 <sup>l</sup>	41.9 <sup>o</sup>	93.0	35.0 <sup>u</sup>	83.8	2.6 <sup>f</sup>	11.0	105.2	6.6 <sup>f</sup>	40.0	0.583	0.0
77	Sri Lanka	.706	10.7	89.3	40.0	87.0	9.8	65.6	2.4	18.0	104.4	4.1	57.0	0.017	0.0
78	Maldives	.704	7.4 <sup>c</sup>	74.2 <sup>d</sup>	53.2 <sup>n</sup>	83.7 <sup>f</sup>	3.2	73.8	2.0	32.0	105.1	6.1	43.0 <sup>d</sup>	0.000	0.0
79	Jamaica	.703	10.2	71.6	75.9	93.0	31.3	74.4	3.1	130.0	103.9	7.3	60.0	1.324	0.0
80	Bolivia	.701	9.2	63.3	79.2	86.0	48.2	88.8	2.0	146.0	104.2	18.3	43.0	0.032	1.8
80	Peru	.701	9.6 <sup>e</sup>	53.0	71.2	85.0	41.5	95.0	2.1	51.0	104.1	11.1	38.0	0.052	3.5
82	Kosovo	.700	8.4 <sup>f</sup>	47.4	22.8	97.0	36.7 <sup>v</sup>	91.9	2.5	175.5 <sup>f</sup>	106.9	11.9 <sup>f</sup>	85.0	0.000	32.5 <sup>f</sup>
83	Lao PDR	.698	5.1 <sup>c</sup>	37.9	68.7	85.0	22.0	85.6	1.5	112.0	105.3	8.0	56.0	0.000	0.0
84	Israel	.697	13.6 <sup>e</sup>	91.9	76.8	96.0	24.2	80.6	2.9	2.0 <sup>b</sup>	105.5	5.6	63.0	0.021	99.6
84	Kyrgyzstan	.697	11.8	43.8	53.4	95.0	22.2	76.9	2.5	42.0	105.6	13.3	71.0	0.083	0.0
86	Panama	.696	10.8	43.1	60.9	84.0	21.7	79.4	2.9	37.0	105.3	7.8	54.0	0.089	0.0
87	El Salvador	.691	7.0	29.2	58.2	86.0	31.7	88.8	0.8	39.0	104.8	5.7	85.0	0.030	0.0
88	Jordan	.686	9.7	34.1	16.0	87.0	17.9	59.4	2.7	31.0	104.9	13.5	68.0	0.000	0.0
89	China	.685	7.6	87.3	57.7 <sup>f</sup>	100.0	26.5	78.1	1.9	16.0	110.3	7.6	93.0	0.010	0.0
89	Samoa	.685	11.8	69.8 <sup>f</sup>	37.6	86.7 <sup>f</sup>	13.0	75.0	2.1 <sup>f</sup>	101.0	107.6	17.8	74.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
89	Tajikistan	.685	10.9 <sup>c</sup>	39.4	28.8 <sup>m</sup>	68.0	26.6	78.8	0.7	14.0	106.3	14.0	93.0	0.000	0.0
89	Tonga	.685	10.9	75.9 <sup>f</sup>	56.2	93.9 <sup>f</sup>	10.0	58.8	2.0 <sup>f</sup>	67.0	108.1	16.9	77.9 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
89	Trinidad and Tobago	.685	10.9	73.6 <sup>d</sup>	61.1	92.0	29.2	75.0	2.9	54.0	104.0	7.5	42.0	3.017	0.0
94	Gabon	.679	10.5 <sup>l</sup>	61.3	59.7 <sup>f</sup>	89.0	23.4	95.0	2.9	233.0	102.1	22.0	34.0	0.000	0.0
94	Mauritius	.679	10.0 <sup>c</sup>	89.4	57.7	93.0	17.9	89.4	2.5	66.0	103.5	11.4 <sup>f</sup>	53.0	0.314	0.0
96	Indonesia	.678	8.2	52.3	59.5	75.0	21.9	70.6	2.3	140.0	106.0	8.9	74.0	0.004	9.4
97	Dominican Republic	.675	9.2	49.0	61.4	90.0	33.3	86.3	1.9	124.0	104.4	9.6	40.0	0.052	0.0
98	Uzbekistan	.674	11.8	38.8	44.7	77.0	34.0	82.5	1.8	26.0	107.8	11.2 <sup>f</sup>	81.0	0.028	0.0
99	Bhutan	.673	5.2 <sup>q</sup>	27.7 <sup>l</sup>	68.4	69.7 <sup>f</sup>	6.9	75.0	2.8	47.0	104.8	8.6	59.0 <sup>o</sup>	0.000	0.0
100	Tunisia	.671	7.0	28.7	27.8	86.0	14.8	64.4	3.2	36.0	105.0	10.1	55.0	0.000	7.0
101	Marshall Islands	.670	11.5 <sup>l</sup>	65.4 <sup>f</sup>	43.0	87.9 <sup>f</sup>	12.1	65.6	2.0 <sup>f</sup>	155.0	107.0	19.3	70.7 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
102	Morocco	.668	5.3 <sup>l</sup>	32.7	21.3	82.0	21.4	75.6	3.0	70.0	104.7	10.5	57.0	0.000	0.0
102	Timor-Leste	.668	5.8 <sup>w</sup>	58.6 <sup>f</sup>	52.7	77.4 <sup>f</sup>	35.4	86.3	2.1	192.0	107.1	28.2	64.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
104	Belize	.667	9.0	52.3 <sup>l</sup>	60.9 <sup>n</sup>	84.0	19.6	82.5	2.1 <sup>f</sup>	67.0	105.1	7.8	66.0	1.452	0.0
104	Cambodia	.667	4.4	32.5	82.9	79.0	15.5	81.3	1.2	137.0	105.3	9.1	54.0	0.000	0.0
106	Türkiye	.664	7.9	62.5	39.6	96.0	19.9	82.5	1.8	15.0	105.0	12.1	44.0	0.007	30.7
107	Nicaragua	.659	9.9 <sup>l</sup>	21.6	57.5 <sup>l</sup>	84.0	55.0	86.3	0.1	60.0	103.5	6.4	54.0	0.028	0.0

WPS Index rank 2025/26	Country	WPS Index score 2025/26	INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
			Education (years) 2019–2023 <sup>a</sup>	Financial inclusion (%) 2021–2022 <sup>a</sup>	Employment (%) 2020–2024 <sup>a</sup>	Cellphone use (%) 2024	Parliamentary representation (%) 2025	Absence of legal discrimination (score) 2023	Access to justice (score) 2024	Maternal mortality (deaths per 100,000 live births) 2023	Son bias (number of sons born per 100 girls) 2024	Intimate partner violence (%) 2018	Community safety (%) 2022–2024 <sup>a</sup>	Political violence targeting women (events per 100,000 women) 2024	Proximity to conflict (%) 2023–2024 <sup>a</sup>
			2019–2023 <sup>a</sup>	2021–2022 <sup>a</sup>	2020–2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2025	2023	2024	2023	2024	2018	2022–2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2023–2024 <sup>a</sup>
108	Botswana	.658	9.7	53.9	60.1	90.0	8.7	63.8	3.0	155.0	103.2	17.1	27.0	0.000	0.0
108	Solomon Islands	.658	5.5 <sup>a</sup>	58.6 <sup>f</sup>	90.0 <sup>x</sup>	77.4 <sup>f</sup>	6.0	56.9	3.0	123.0	107.0	28.1	64.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
FOURTH QUINTILE															
110	Senegal	.657	2.7	50.3	50.0	84.0	41.2	72.5	2.4	237.0	103.1	12.4	48.0	0.000	0.0
111	Azerbaijan	.653	11.0	38.8	68.9 <sup>f</sup>	86.0	20.8	85.0	1.5	18.0	111.3	5.2	62.0	0.000	23.3
112	Kiribati	.652	9.3 <sup>a</sup>	58.6 <sup>f</sup>	42.9	77.4 <sup>f</sup>	11.1	76.3	2.0 <sup>f</sup>	80.0	107.1	25.2	64.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
113	Federated States of Micronesia	.648	6.9 <sup>a</sup>	58.6 <sup>f</sup>	49.4 <sup>t</sup>	77.4 <sup>f</sup>	21.4	61.3	2.0 <sup>f</sup>	129.0	107.0	21.1	64.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
113	South Africa	.648	10.5	86.2	45.0	83.0	44.7	88.1	3.3	118.0	104.0	13.1	25.0	0.064	47.6
115	Vanuatu	.646	6.9	66.9 <sup>f</sup>	45.1	79.9 <sup>f</sup>	1.9	55.6	3.6	100.0	107.0	29.4	70.1 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
116	Ukraine	.645	11.4 <sup>c</sup>	80.7	67.7	100.0	21.2	85.0	2.4	15.0	106.2	8.7	51.0	0.025	92.0
117	Ghana	.639	6.1	62.6	75.8	86.0	14.6	75.0	2.7	234.0	103.8	10.2	62.0	0.081	5.9
118	Venezuela	.638	10.0 <sup>l</sup>	79.7	55.5	98.0	32.1	85.0	1.0	227.0	105.2	8.5	52.0	0.097	38.2
119	Brazil	.632	8.6 <sup>e</sup>	80.9	60.5	91.0	18.4	85.0	2.6	67.0	104.5	6.5	40.0	0.308	44.5
120	Nepal	.631	3.5	49.9	30.5 <sup>d</sup>	75.0	34.1	80.6	2.7	142.0	104.9	11.4	55.0	0.084	0.0
121	Rwanda	.624	4.5	45.0 <sup>d</sup>	51.3	67.0	61.3	91.9	2.2	229.0	102.6	23.5	76.0	0.014	17.6
121	Tanzania	.624	5.5	46.0	88.1	75.0	37.8	81.3	2.6	276.0	103.1	24.3	60.0	0.020	15.8
123	Algeria	.621	6.5	31.2	17.8 <sup>d</sup>	100.0	6.8	57.5	2.5	62.0	104.6	10.5 <sup>f</sup>	71.0	0.004	2.6
124	São Tomé and Príncipe	.620	5.2	49.5 <sup>f</sup>	21.5 <sup>d</sup>	70.7 <sup>f</sup>	14.6	83.1	2.7	75.0	102.7	18.1	55.7 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
125	Egypt	.617	7.9	24.2	20.1	74.0	23.0	50.6	2.3	17.0	105.5	15.1	76.0	0.000	52.1
126	Lesotho	.614	8.4 <sup>e</sup>	62.4	54.7 <sup>n</sup>	80.0	24.2	80.6	2.7	478.0	102.8	16.5	29.0	0.000	0.0
127	Ecuador	.612	8.9	57.9	61.7	87.0	45.0	89.4	2.1	55.0	104.6	8.1	31.0	0.121	74.1
128	Iran	.608	10.9 <sup>e</sup>	85.1	14.8	87.0	4.9	31.3	1.5	16.0	105.2	17.6	72.0	0.033	17.8
128	Libya	.608	8.4 <sup>a</sup>	59.6 <sup>d</sup>	36.1 <sup>y</sup>	100.0	16.5	50.0	0.8	59.0	105.7	12.7 <sup>f</sup>	77.0	0.028	34.2
128	Namibia	.608	7.5 <sup>c</sup>	69.3	60.1 <sup>z</sup>	79.0	32.6	80.0	2.9	139.0	101.1	15.9	44.0	0.194	0.0
131	India	.607	6.2	77.6	42.2	68.0	14.7	74.4	2.1	80.0	107.1	18.4	68.0	0.024	15.0
131	Philippines	.607	9.1	47.4	62.3	91.0	28.2	78.8	2.7	84.0	107.7	5.9	58.0	0.053	71.4
133	Angola	.601	4.5 <sup>w</sup>	22.3 <sup>t</sup>	78.6	71.0 <sup>f</sup>	39.1	79.4	2.4	183.0	102.8	24.7	58.0 <sup>f</sup>	0.047	2.3
133	Sierra Leone	.601	2.4	24.8	62.6 <sup>z</sup>	52.0	29.5	92.5	2.8	354.0	103.4	19.8	50.0	0.000	0.0
135	Comoros	.590	5.2	29.3	61.1	65.0	15.2	65.0	1.0	179.0	103.2	8.2	60.0	0.000	0.0
135	Zimbabwe	.590	8.1	54.0	66.2	82.0	33.2	86.9	2.4	358.0	102.5	18.2	33.0	0.057	0.0
137	Côte d'Ivoire	.589	4.0	37.4	71.7	85.0	16.5	95.0	2.1	359.0	103.0	16.4	60.0	0.019	0.0
138	Benin	.587	2.0	39.8	86.2	75.0	26.6	83.8	2.9	518.0 <sup>aa</sup>	104.2	14.6	58.0	0.083	0.0
138	Uganda	.587	5.2 <sup>e</sup>	65.1	80.1	68.0	34.1	83.8	1.9	170.0	102.9	26.1	44.0	0.083	16.3
140	Congo	.583	7.3 <sup>c</sup>	43.8	57.1 <sup>f</sup>	67.0	20.2	58.1	1.5	241.0	102.6	18.5 <sup>f</sup>	45.0	0.000	0.0
141	Lebanon	.575	13.1 <sup>z</sup>	16.6	30.9 <sup>n</sup>	90.0	6.3	58.8	1.9	15.0	105.3	14.7 <sup>f</sup>	44.0	0.000	100.0
142	Zambia	.566	6.6 <sup>c</sup>	45.0	66.5	74.0	15.0	81.3	2.1	85.0	101.1	27.8	35.0	0.009	0.0
143	Togo	.562	4.5 <sup>e</sup>	44.3	83.8	77.0	18.4	97.5	1.2	349.0	102.8	12.7	43.0	0.021	16.4
144	Guatemala	.561	5.3	34.3	58.9	79.0	20.0	73.8	1.4	94.0	103.9	7.3	46.0	0.140	36.0
144	Honduras	.561	6.8	28.9	44.6	83.0	27.3	75.0	1.9	47.0	105.1	7.2	54.0	0.725	63.6
BOTTOM QUINTILE															
146	Djibouti	.560	2.7 <sup>t</sup>	8.8 <sup>p</sup>	16.0 <sup>d</sup>	66.2 <sup>f</sup>	26.2	71.3	2.2	162.0	103.7	17.5 <sup>f</sup>	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
147	Mexico	.558	9.1	42.3	55.6	81.0	50.2	88.8	1.8	42.0	103.9	9.9	41.0	0.715	87.8
148	Eswatini	.556	8.5	69.2	42.6	85.0	28.8	46.3	1.7	118.0	102.9	17.7	32.0	0.000	100.0
149	Colombia	.551	9.0	56.2	57.9	88.0	30.1	84.4	2.2	59.0	104.6	11.9	42.0	0.414	93.2
150	Malawi	.549	4.3	38.1	71.3	59.0	20.7	80.0	2.5	225.0	101.4	16.6	46.0	0.045	0.0



WPS Index rank 2025/ 26	Country	WPS Index score 2025/ 26	INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY			
			Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (score)	Access to justice (score)	Maternal mortality (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Son bias (number of sons born per 100 girls)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Community safety (%)	Political violence targeting women (events per 100,000 women)	Proximity to conflict (%)
			2019– 2023 <sup>a</sup>	2021– 2022 <sup>a</sup>	2020– 2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2025	2023	2024	2023	2024	2018	2022– 2024 <sup>a</sup>	2024	2023– 2024 <sup>a</sup>
151	Mozambique	.548	3.7	38.7	80.9	58.0	39.2	82.5	1.6	82.0	102.0	16.4	45.0	0.084	46.5
152	Kenya	.542	8.0	75.4	66.3	90.0	24.6	83.8	2.2	379.0	102.1	22.8	40.0	0.190	20.9
153	Gambia	.528	3.7	28.1	55.3	80.0	8.6	69.4	3.2	354.0	103.2	10.0	39.0	0.072	9.3
154	Guinea	.527	1.5 <sup>e</sup>	24.0	49.8 <sup>n</sup>	83.0	29.6	73.8	1.5	494.0	104.5	20.8	56.0	0.027	0.0
155	Bangladesh	.526	6.2	43.5	40.8	72.0	20.0 <sup>ab</sup>	49.4	1.5	115.0	104.9	23.2	72.0	0.016	86.1
156	Ethiopia	.516	1.6	38.7	62.3	44.0	39.1	80.0	2.2	195.0	105.5	26.5	52.0	0.046	67.6
157	Liberia	.512	3.9	44.2	52.5 <sup>d</sup>	63.0	10.7	81.3	2.6	628.0 <sup>ab</sup>	103.8	26.9	29.0	0.000	41.6
158	Iraq	.510	5.6 <sup>ac</sup>	14.9	11.0	85.0	28.9	48.1	1.4	66.0	105.7	15.1 <sup>f</sup>	67.0	0.096	56.8
159	Guinea-Bissau	.508	2.5 <sup>i</sup>	31.4 <sup>f</sup>	70.2	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	9.8	51.9	1.7	505.0 <sup>ab</sup>	104.0	21.2 <sup>f</sup>	47.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0
160	Burkina Faso	.507	1.6	30.7	74.8	80.0	18.3	82.5	2.2	242.0	104.2	11.2	63.0	0.262	84.8
160	Papua New Guinea	.507	4.3 <sup>c</sup>	58.6 <sup>f</sup>	60.7	77.4 <sup>f</sup>	2.7	60.0	2.4	189.0	107.6	30.6	64.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.253	16.0
162	Nigeria	.495	6.6	35.0	87.9	85.0	3.6	66.3	2.6	993.0 <sup>ab</sup>	103.8	13.2	51.0	0.135	60.1
163	Niger	.492	1.0 <sup>c</sup>	10.2	79.0	43.0	19.6	53.8	3.0	350.0	104.0	12.9	63.0	0.135	29.8
164	Mali	.478	1.1	41.2	47.2	70.0	30.4	63.8	2.3	367.0	103.3	18.4	67.0	0.140	66.4
165	Chad	.476	1.3	22.6	57.5 <sup>z</sup>	49.0	35.0	66.3	1.3	748.0 <sup>ab</sup>	104.2	16.2	43.0	0.040	18.6
166	Mauritania	.475	4.2 <sup>c</sup>	16.1	33.9 <sup>n</sup>	78.0	23.3	48.1	0.8	381.0	103.3	18.3 <sup>f</sup>	60.0	0.000	57.0
167	Palestine	.469	10.2	25.9	16.9	94.0	21.0 <sup>ad</sup>	26.3	2.5	16.0	105.1	19.1	56.0	1.120	100.0
168	Madagascar	.466	4.3	25.2	76.1	39.0	13.8	69.4	1.8	445.0	103.8	21.9 <sup>f</sup>	38.0	0.251	0.0
169	Pakistan	.462	3.9	13.5	25.3	28.0	17.4	58.8	2.3	155.0	105.5	16.2	41.0	0.006	42.8
170	Somalia	.455	0.9	33.7 <sup>i</sup>	23.0 <sup>n</sup>	87.0	20.1	46.9	2.0	563.0 <sup>ab</sup>	104.4	19.8 <sup>f</sup>	82.0	0.126	45.2
171	Cameroon	.451	5.7 <sup>c</sup>	49.3	70.1	76.0	33.6	60.0	2.3	258.0	103.0	22.0	41.0	1.294	89.4
172	Myanmar	.442	6.1	46.2	52.7	94.0	15.0 <sup>ao</sup>	58.8	1.0	185.0	106.6	10.7	38.0	0.365	100.0
173	South Sudan	.411	4.8 <sup>af</sup>	4.2	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	32.3	67.5	1.3	692.0 <sup>ab</sup>	103.5	26.7	43.0 <sup>d</sup>	0.527	42.2
174	Burundi	.407	2.8 <sup>e</sup>	6.7 <sup>i</sup>	89.9	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	38.9	76.3	1.1	392.0	102.5	22.1	62.0 <sup>z</sup>	0.382	100.0
175	Democratic Republic of the Congo	.405	6.1 <sup>c</sup>	20.5	69.2	35.0	13.5	78.8	1.3	427.0	102.3	35.6	45.0	0.129	31.3
176	Haiti	.399	4.8 <sup>d</sup>	30.0 <sup>d</sup>	54.3 <sup>f</sup>	75.5 <sup>f</sup>	2.5 <sup>aq</sup>	61.3	1.1	328.0	103.1	12.2	45.0 <sup>z</sup>	0.773	81.8
177	Sudan	.397	4.2	10.0 <sup>i</sup>	15.6	62.0 <sup>f</sup>	22.1 <sup>ah</sup>	32.5	1.3	256.0	104.1	16.7	52.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.425	63.4
178	Syrian Arab Republic	.364	5.1 <sup>i</sup>	19.6 <sup>p</sup>	46.4 <sup>f</sup>	69.1 <sup>f</sup>	9.6	40.0	0.7	20.0	105.3	19.0 <sup>f</sup>	17.0 <sup>o</sup>	0.884	97.1
179	Central African Republic	.362	2.6	9.7 <sup>d</sup>	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	11.4	77.5	1.5	692.0 <sup>ab</sup>	103.2	20.9	50.0 <sup>d</sup>	0.397	86.1
180	Yemen	.323	3.6	5.4	5.5 <sup>i</sup>	52.0	0.3	26.9	0.8	118.0	105.9	19.8 <sup>f</sup>	43.0	0.140	71.3
181	Afghanistan	.279	1.2	4.7	25.1	43.0	27.2 <sup>ai</sup>	31.9	0.2	521.0 <sup>ab</sup>	105.1	34.7	25.0	0.265	68.2

Country and group		INCLUSION					JUSTICE				SECURITY				
		WPS Index score 2025/26	Education (years) 2019–2023 <sup>a</sup>	Financial inclusion (%) 2021–2022 <sup>a</sup>	Employment (%) 2020–2024 <sup>a</sup>	Cellphone use (%) 2024	Parliamentary representation (%) 2025	Absence of legal discrimination (score) 2023	Access to justice (score) 2024	Maternal mortality (deaths per 100,000 live births) 2023	Son bias (number of sons born per 100 girls) 2024	Intimate partner violence (%) 2018	Community safety (%) 2022–2024 <sup>a</sup>	Political violence targeting women (events per 100,000 women) 2024	Proximity to conflict (%) 2023–2024 <sup>a</sup>
OTHER COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIES NOT RANKED IN THE WPS INDEX															
Andorra	..	11.5	95.2 <sup>f</sup>	72.2 <sup>f</sup>	96.4 <sup>f</sup>	50.0	90.4 <sup>f</sup>	3.2 <sup>f</sup>	11.0	106.3	5.1 <sup>f</sup>	64.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Antigua and Barbuda	..	12.2 <sup>i</sup>	83.6 <sup>f</sup>	82.7	93.7 <sup>f</sup>	22.9	68.8	2.8 <sup>f</sup>	35.0	103.2	6.2 <sup>f</sup>	56.4 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Bahamas	..	12.9 <sup>e</sup>	83.6 <sup>f</sup>	92.0	93.7 <sup>f</sup>	21.8	81.3	2.8 <sup>f</sup>	76.0	102.8	6.2 <sup>f</sup>	56.4 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Brunei Darussalam	..	9.3 <sup>i</sup>	88.6 <sup>f</sup>	66.2	96.2 <sup>f</sup>	11.8	53.1	2.7 <sup>f</sup>	36.0	107.6	6.2 <sup>f</sup>	70.7 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Cuba	..	10.8	70.9 <sup>f</sup>	55.9 <sup>f</sup>	91.5 <sup>f</sup>	55.7	79.5 <sup>f</sup>	0.8	35.0	107.0	4.6	63.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.054	0.0	
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	..	5.6 <sup>f</sup>	53.0 <sup>f</sup>	61.3 <sup>f</sup>	73.4 <sup>f</sup>	17.6	71.9 <sup>f</sup>	0.4	67.0	106.0	16.2 <sup>f</sup>	66.0 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Dominica	..	10.0 <sup>i</sup>	70.9 <sup>f</sup>	55.9 <sup>f</sup>	91.5 <sup>f</sup>	40.6	62.5	2.1 <sup>f</sup>	36.0	103.5	8.5 <sup>f</sup>	63.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Equatorial Guinea	..	6.6 <sup>f</sup>	60.9 <sup>f</sup>	58.3 <sup>f</sup>	78.3 <sup>f</sup>	28.3	58.1	1.3	174.0	103.2	28.7	61.7 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Eritrea	..	4.0 <sup>a</sup>	31.4 <sup>f</sup>	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	58.5 <sup>f</sup>	23.0 <sup>f</sup>	69.4	1.0	291.0	103.2	21.2 <sup>f</sup>	47.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Liechtenstein	..	12.2 <sup>aj</sup>	95.2 <sup>f</sup>	69.0 <sup>d,ak</sup>	96.4 <sup>f</sup>	32.0	90.4 <sup>f</sup>	3.2 <sup>f</sup>	10.4 <sup>f</sup>	116.3	5.1 <sup>f</sup>	64.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Macao	..	10.3 <sup>m</sup>	86.8 <sup>f</sup>	78.8	96.1 <sup>f</sup>	27.1 <sup>f</sup>	83.3 <sup>f</sup>	2.5 <sup>f</sup>	38.5 <sup>f</sup>	107.9	6.5 <sup>f</sup>	74.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Monaco	..	12.7 <sup>f</sup>	95.2 <sup>f</sup>	58.8 <sup>m</sup>	96.4 <sup>f</sup>	45.8	90.4 <sup>f</sup>	3.2 <sup>f</sup>	5.0	104.9	5.1 <sup>f</sup>	64.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Nauru	..	10.2	82.2 <sup>f</sup>	65.5	95.0 <sup>f</sup>	10.5	81.1 <sup>f</sup>	2.4 <sup>f</sup>	273.0	107.2	20.0	74.9 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	11.1 <sup>a</sup>	83.6 <sup>f</sup>	68.0 <sup>f</sup>	93.7 <sup>f</sup>	31.3	71.3	2.8 <sup>f</sup>	74.0	103.7	6.2 <sup>f</sup>	56.4 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Saint Lucia	..	8.8	70.9 <sup>f</sup>	73.4	91.5 <sup>f</sup>	26.7	83.8	2.1 <sup>f</sup>	44.0	103.1	8.5 <sup>f</sup>	63.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	..	11.4 <sup>i</sup>	70.9 <sup>f</sup>	55.9 <sup>f</sup>	91.5 <sup>f</sup>	21.7	68.1	2.1 <sup>f</sup>	56.0	103.3	8.5 <sup>f</sup>	63.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
San Marino	..	11.3	95.2 <sup>f</sup>	71.4	96.4 <sup>f</sup>	35.0	85.0	3.2 <sup>f</sup>	8.0	106.5	5.1 <sup>f</sup>	64.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
Tuvalu	..	10.3	63.2 <sup>f</sup>	41.5	82.8 <sup>f</sup>	0.0	72.5 <sup>f</sup>	2.0 <sup>f</sup>	170.0	107.0	19.8	67.6 <sup>f</sup>	0.000	0.0	
COUNTRY GROUPS AND REGIONS															
Developed countries	.847	12.9	98.1	73.1	96.3	31.0	93.2	3.5	10.0	105.3	5.0	65.3	0.006	0.9	
Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia	.715	11.5	76.9	65.0	95.1	22.3	81.9	2.0	14.5	106.2	7.7	60.4	0.020	20.8	
East Asia and the Pacific	.680	7.9	78.1	60.3	95.2	25.3	76.9	2.0	67.1	108.4	8.1	84.3	0.020	7.8	
Latin America and the Caribbean	.625	9.1	63.4	60.1	88.0	32.7	85.0	2.2	73.9	104.4	8.2	42.2	0.338	46.6	
Middle East and North Africa	.536	6.8	27.5	23.5	79.9	18.3	50.4	1.9	117.1	105.1	14.2	64.7	0.134	42.0	
South Asia	.581	6.1	66.8	38.6	64.9	15.5	67.5	2.0	113.0	106.4	18.6	64.7	0.027	25.5	
Sub Saharan Africa	.511	5.3	42.1	71.1	68.5	24.5	76.4	2.2	436.5	103.4	20.1	48.6	0.130	36.9	
Fragile States	.458	5.3	34.2	58.9	69.2	19.7	64.4	1.8	456.8	104.1	18.9	49.2	0.212	60.2	
World	.650	8.4	70.3	56.3	83.5	23.5	76.1	2.2	188.3	105.5	12.4	66.3	0.070	21.7	
High income	.818	12.7	95.2	72.6	96.7	28.8	89.6	3.1	9.8	105.3	5.2	64.9	0.015	3.5	
Upper-middle income	.679	8.3	76.4	56.0	93.5	26.2	76.9	2.0	55.5	106.7	8.7	73.8	0.081	16.3	
Lower-middle income	.581	6.4	58.1	48.2	71.8	18.3	71.2	2.1	232.8	105.6	16.7	62.8	0.060	29.1	
Low income	.464	3.5	28.9	56.8	54.1	24.9	67.1	1.6	319.1	103.8	23.4	48.6	0.168	46.0	
Very high human development	.805	12.4	92.2	70.4	96.3	28.2	88.2	3.0	11.4	105.4	5.7	62.6	0.014	4.9	
High human development	.673	8.3	72.9	55.6	92.7	26.3	76.6	2.1	57.3	106.9	8.8	75.2	0.076	18.4	
Medium human development	.577	6.1	64.0	49.6	72.4	17.0	71.7	2.0	259.9	105.3	18.2	62.9	0.084	28.6	
Low human development	.458	3.3	22.0	46.6	45.7	23.0	64.3	1.9	303.6	104.2	21.2	46.8	0.112	45.0	

**Notes to table**

- .. Not available or not complete.
- a. Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.
- b. In calculating the WPS Index score, the maternal mortality ratio is floored at 4.
- c. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) based on data from Barro and Lee (2018) and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024).
- d. Refers to 2017.
- e. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) based on data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024).
- f. Imputed value, calculated as the mean of the regional and relevant group averages.
- g. Based on the counts reported in Lee (2024).
- h. Refers to 2022. Based on data from Statista (2025).
- i. Based on data reported by UNDP–HDRO (2025).
- j. Refers to the 2021 election for the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. See Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2024).
- k. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) based on data from Eurostat (2024) and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024).
- l. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) based on data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024) and estimates using cross-country regression.
- m. Refers to 2016.
- n. Refers to 2019.
- o. Refers to 2015.
- p. Refers to 2011.
- q. UNDP–HDRO (2025) estimate based on data from Barro and Lee (2018), ICF Macro Demographic and Health Surveys, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024), and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.
- s. Kuwait’s National Assembly elected in June 2023 was dissolved in May 2024.
- t. Refers to 2014.
- u. Based on the counts reported for the House of Representatives at <https://camara.registrok12.com/en/gender/female-en/> and the counts reported for the Senate at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate\\_of\\_Puerto\\_Rico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_of_Puerto_Rico).
- v. Refers to the 2025 Kosovan Parliamentary Election. See International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2025).
- w. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) based on data from ICF Macro Demographic and Health Surveys for various years and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024).
- x. Refers to 2013.
- y. Refers to 2012.
- z. Refers to 2018.
- aa. In calculating the WPS Index score, the maternal mortality ratio is capped at 500.
- ab. Bangladesh’s Parliament elected in January 2024 was dissolved in August 2024.
- ac. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) based on data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024) and UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys for various years.
- ad. Refers to 2021–2022 election results from the Palestine Central Elections Commission and the Palestine Ministry of Local Government. See UN Women (2023).
- ae. Myanmar’s Parliament elected in November 2020 was suspended in February 2021.
- af. Refers to 2008.
- ag. Haiti’s Parliament elected in October 2015 was dissolved in 2021.
- ah. Sudan’s National Assembly elected in April 2015 was suspended in October 2019.
- ai. Afghanistan’s Parliament elected in October 2018 was dissolved in August 2021.
- aj. Updated by UNDP–HDRO (2025) using the mean years of schooling trend of Austria and data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024).
- ak. Imputed value, calculated using the number of employed women from the International Labour Organization’s ILOSTAT database and the number of women ages 25–64 from the median variant of UNDESA (2025).

## Definitions

**Education:** Average number of years of schooling for women ages 25 and older.

**Financial inclusion:** Percentage of women and girls ages 15 and older who report having an individual or joint account at a bank or other financial institution or who report using a mobile money service.

**Employment:** Percentage of women ages 25–64 who are employed in the formal or informal workforce.

**Cellphone use:** Percentage of women and girls ages 15 and older who report having a mobile phone that they use to make and receive personal calls.

**Parliamentary representation:** Percentage of total seats in lower and upper houses of the national parliament that are held by women.

**Absence of legal discrimination:** Extent (on a scale of 0–100) to which laws and regulations differentiate between women and men or protect women's opportunities across 35 aspects of life and work.

**Access to justice for women:** Extent (on a scale of 0–4) to which women are able to exercise justice by bringing cases before the courts without risk to their personal safety, participating in a free trial, and seeking redress if public authorities violate their rights.

**Maternal mortality:** Number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

**Son bias:** Extent to which the sex ratio at birth (number of male births per 100 female births) exceeds the natural demographic rate of 105.

**Intimate partner violence:** Percentage of ever-partnered women who experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their intimate partner in the 12 months preceding the survey in which the information was gathered.

**Community safety:** Percentage of women and girls ages 15 and older who responded "Yes" to the Gallup World Poll question "Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?"

**Political violence targeting women:** Number of civilian-targeting events in which women or girls are the primary target of the violence per 100,000 women.

**Proximity to conflict:** Percentage of women who live within 50 kilometers of armed conflict.

## Main data sources

**WPS Index rank:** Based on WPS Index value.

**WPS Index score:** Calculated by the authors based on the methodology outlined in appendix 1.

**Education:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics Data Browser (<http://data.uis.unesco.org/>), accessed April 2025, and United Nations Development Programme–Human Development Report Office Composite Indices (<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/composite-indices>), accessed June 2025.

**Financial inclusion:** World Bank Global Findex Database (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalfindex>), accessed April 2025.

**Employment:** International Labour Organization ILOSTAT database (<https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/employment>), accessed April 2025.

**Cellphone use:** Gallup World Poll (<https://www.gallup.com/topic/world-poll.aspx>), accessed April 2025.

**Parliamentary representation:** Inter-Parliamentary Union Parline database (<https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=3&year=2025>), accessed April 2025.

**Absence of legal discrimination:** World Bank Women, Business and the Law database (<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl>), accessed April 2025.

**Access to justice for women:** V-Dem Dataset, version 15 (<https://www.v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/>), accessed April 2025.

**Maternal mortality:** United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency Group (<https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/maternal-mortality/#data>), accessed April 2025; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Database (indicator 3.1.1) (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>), accessed April 2025.

**Son bias:** United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs World Population Prospects, 2024 Revision (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>), accessed April 2025.

**Intimate partner violence:** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>), accessed April 2025.

**Community safety:** Gallup World Poll (<https://www.gallup.com/topic/world-poll.aspx>), accessed April 2025.

**Political violence targeting women:** Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project (<https://acleddata.com/>), accessed April 2025.

**Proximity to conflict:** Uppsala Conflict Data Program Georeferenced Event Dataset, Global version 23.1; calculated by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (<https://www.prio.org/>), accessed April 2025.

## APPENDIX 1

# Methodology

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index is a summary measure capturing changes in women's status across three dimensions: inclusion, justice, and security. It is the geometric mean of the subindices computed for each of the three dimensions, while each subindex is the arithmetic mean of the normalized indicators for each dimension. The 2025/26 WPS Index is based on 13 indicators, including the 4 that were introduced in the 2023/24 edition (access to justice and maternal mortality in the justice dimension and political violence targeting women and proximity to conflict in the security dimension). As in the 2023/24 edition, the indicator for women's employment refers to the employment-to-population ratio for women ages 25–64, to better capture working-age women (see box A1.1 for how the ratio is calculated). Table A1.1 presents the indicators, definitions, reference years, primary sources, and access dates.

The selection of indicators for the WPS Index was guided by conceptual relevance, reliability, consistency, and data availability, coverage, and timeliness. Indicators were assigned to one of the three dimensions based primarily on conceptual relevance.<sup>1</sup>

Results of a multivariate analysis of the 2025/26 WPS Index dataset largely confirm that the dimensions are internally consistent, meaning that the indicators assigned to each dimension measure the same underlying concepts: inclusion, justice, and security (see the section below on “Multidimensionality and internal consistency”).

### Normalization and aggregation

This section describes the normalization and aggregation steps required to compute the WPS Index and provides a worked-through example. The policy and academic literature on composite indices provide a robust foundation for our approach.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Normalization**

Normalization makes data comparable across indicators so that the information can be combined in a meaningful way. All indicators need to be presented in such a way that higher or lower values consistently mean that the performance is better or worse. That means that some indicators need to be transformed. A typical approach is to rescale the set of values from 0 to 1 (or 0 to 100), with 0 denoting the worst performance and 1 (or 100) denoting the best. This approach has been followed for other indices, such as the SDG Index developed by Schmidt-Traub



**TABLE A1.1 Indicators, definitions, reference years, and primary sources for the 2025/26 WPS Index**

DIMENSION AND INDICATOR	DEFINITION	REFERENCE YEAR	PRIMARY SOURCE	ACCESS DATE
<b>INCLUSION</b>				
Education (years)	Average number of years of schooling for women ages 25 and older.	2019–2023	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics Data Browser ( <a href="http://data.uis.unesco.org/">http://data.uis.unesco.org/</a> )	April 2025
			United Nations Development Programme–Human Development Report Office Composite Indices ( <a href="https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/composite-indices">https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/composite-indices</a> )	June 2025
Financial inclusion (%)	Percentage of women and girls ages 15 and older who report having an individual or joint account at a bank or other financial institution or who report using a mobile money service.	2021–2022	World Bank Global Findex Database ( <a href="https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalfindex">https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalfindex</a> )	April 2025
Employment (%)	Percentage of women ages 25–64 who are employed in the formal or informal workforce.	2020–2024	International Labour Organization ILOSTAT database ( <a href="https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/employment">https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/employment</a> )	April 2025
Cellphone use (%)	Percentage of women and girls ages 15 and older who report having a mobile phone that they use to make and receive personal calls.	2024	Gallup World Poll ( <a href="https://www.gallup.com/topic/world-poll.aspx">https://www.gallup.com/topic/world-poll.aspx</a> )	April 2025
Parliamentary representation (%)	Percentage of total seats in lower and upper houses of the national parliament that are held by women.	2025	Inter-Parliamentary Union Parline database ( <a href="https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/?date_month=3&amp;date_year=2025">https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/?date_month=3&amp;date_year=2025</a> )	April 2025
<b>JUSTICE</b>				
Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	Extent (on a scale of 0–100) to which laws and regulations differentiate between women and men or protect women's opportunities across 35 aspects of life and work.	2023	World Bank Women, Business and the Law database ( <a href="https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl">https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl</a> )	April 2025
Access to justice (aggregate score)	Extent (on a scale of 0–4) to which women are able to exercise justice by bringing cases before the courts without risk to their personal safety, participating in a free trial, and seeking redress if public authorities violate their rights.	2024	V-Dem Dataset, version 15 ( <a href="https://www.v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/">https://www.v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/</a> )	April 2025
Maternal mortality (ratio)	Number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.	2023	World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, World Bank Group, and United Nations Population Division (United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency Group). Data on maternal mortality ( <a href="https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/maternal-mortality/#data">https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/maternal-mortality/#data</a> )	April 2025
			United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency Group ( <a href="https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/maternal-mortality/#data">https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/maternal-mortality/#data</a> )	April 2025
Son bias (ratio)	Extent to which the sex ratio at birth (number of male births per 100 female births) exceeds the natural demographic rate of 105.	2024	United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs World Population Prospects, 2024 Revision ( <a href="https://population.un.org/wpp/">https://population.un.org/wpp/</a> )	April 2025
<b>SECURITY</b>				
Intimate partner violence (%)	Percentage of ever-partnered women who experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their intimate partner in the 12 months preceding the survey in which the information was gathered.	2018	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Database ( <a href="https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database">https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database</a> )	April 2025
Community safety (%)	Percentage of women and girls ages 15 and older who responded "Yes" to the Gallup World Poll question "Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?"	2022–2024	Gallup World Poll ( <a href="https://www.gallup.com/topic/world-poll.aspx">https://www.gallup.com/topic/world-poll.aspx</a> )	April 2025
Political violence targeting women (ratio)	Number of civilian-targeting events in which women or girls are the primary target of the violence per 100,000 women.	2024	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project ( <a href="https://acleddata.com">https://acleddata.com</a> )	April 2025
Proximity to conflict (%)	Percentage of women who live within 50 kilometers of armed conflict.	2023–2024	Uppsala Conflict Data Program Georeferenced Event Dataset, Global version 23.1; calculated by the Peace Research Institute Oslo ( <a href="https://www.prio.org">https://www.prio.org</a> )	April 2025

Source: Authors.

**BOX A1.1 Calculating the employment-to-population ratio for women ages 25–64**

The employment indicator is based on estimates of employment from national labor force surveys, as compiled and reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO). ILO reports the employment-to-population ratio by sex for several age groups: 15–24, 15–64, 15 or older, and 25 or older but not for the age group 25–64 used to compute the WPS Index scores. We used the ILO employment and working-age population data reported for 10-year age bands (25–34, 35–44, 45–54, and 55–64)—and wider age bands for some countries. The employment-to-population ratio ( $E/P$ ) for women ages 25–64 ( $E/P_{25-64}$ ) is computed as:

$$E/P_{25-64} = 100 \cdot \frac{E_{25-34} + E_{35-44} + E_{45-54} + E_{55-64}}{P_{25-34} + P_{35-44} + P_{45-54} + P_{55-64}}$$

The ILO database on employment by sex and age does not have 2024 data to compute the employment-to-population ratio by sex for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, and Macao. For these four economies we calculated

the employment-to-population ratio using the number of employed women (from ILO) for the most recent year available and the number of women ages 25–64 (based on the median variant in UNDESA 2025) for the same year.

For example, for Kuwait, the most recent year with employment data in the ILO database is 2022. The total number of employed women ages 25–64 for that year (in thousands) is provided as  $E_{25-54} = 403.8$  and  $E_{55-64} = 22.9$ . Thus, the total number of employed women ages 25–64 in thousands is the sum of those two values,  $E_{25-64} = 426.7$ . Because the ILO database lacks data on the working-age female population in 2022, we used the size of the female population ages 25–64 ( $P_{25-64}$ ) in thousands in 2022 from UNDESA (2025), which is 1,066. The ratio of these two quantities is the employment-to-population ratio:

$$E/P_{25-64} = 100 \cdot \frac{426.7}{1,066} = 40.0\%$$

et al. (2017), the Africa Gender Equality Index developed by the African Development Bank in 2015, and the Human Development Index published by the United Nations Development Programme annually since 1990.

Rescaling is sensitive to the choice of bounds and to extreme values (outliers) at both tails of the distribution. Where the observed data range for an indicator is wide, the indicator acquires a larger implicit weight that, together with the assigned explicit weight, defines the relative contribution of the indicator to the WPS Index. Setting upper and lower bounds can reduce spurious variability, although this needs to be done with care.

Six of the indicators for the WPS Index fall naturally between 0 and 100 and are not rescaled: financial inclusion, employment, cellphone use, absence of legal discrimination, community safety, and proximity to conflict. We use aspirational maximum values of 15 years for mean years of schooling, 50 percent for parliamentary representation, and a score of 4 for access to justice. And we use slightly augmented observed maximum values for intimate partner violence (50 percent) and political violence targeting women (1.5). The bounds are laid out in table A1.2.

We use capping to avoid allowing outliers to have undue influence on the values of the subindices and the aggregate index. The maternal mortality ratio is capped at 500, meaning that for any country with a ratio of 500 or higher, the normalized score of this indicator is 0 (worst). This applies to 10 countries in the 2025 edition: Afghanistan, Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan. At the other end of the distribution, for any country with a maternal mortality ratio of 4 or lower, the normalized score is 1 (best). This applies to 22 countries in the 2025 edition: Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and United Arab Emirates.

This two-sided capping means that all countries with 500 or more maternal deaths per 100,000 live births are considered to operate at the same level of negligence of maternal health and that a difference in maternal mortality below 4 is a random effect rather than the effect of a difference in healthcare systems. For parliamentary representation, the aspirational share of 50 percent of seats held by women is also a cap. For the four countries where women have more than 50 percent representation in parliament—Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Rwanda—the normalized score of this indicator is 1 (best). For son bias (sex ratio at birth), the cap is 1.10. For any country with a son bias of 1.10 or higher, the normalized score of this indicator is 0 (worst). This applies to four countries in the 2025 edition: Azerbaijan, China, Lichtenstein, and Viet Nam.

The 2025/26 WPS Index uses the same lower and upper bounds for component indicators as the 2023/24 edition except the upper bound for political violence targeting women. That upper bound was increased from 1.2 events per 100,000 women to 1.5 events to reflect the latest data, where four countries (Belize, Cameroon, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago) had a political violence targeting women value greater than the previous maximum of 1.2.<sup>3</sup>

Unless otherwise indicated in the worked-through example of Rwanda below, indicators are normalized as:

$$\text{Normalized indicator score} = \frac{\text{Actual value} - \text{lower bound}}{\text{Upper bound} - \text{lower bound}}$$

### Aggregation

The dimensions and indicators of the WPS Index are considered integrated, indivisible, and equally important. We therefore assign equal weight to inclusion, justice, and security and equal weight to each indicator within these three dimensions.

**TABLE A1.2 Lower and upper bounds for component indicators of the 2025/26 WPS Index**

DIMENSION AND INDICATOR	LOWER BOUND	UPPER BOUND
<b>INCLUSION</b>		
Education (years)	0	15
Financial inclusion (%)	0	100
Employment (%)	0	100
Cellphone use (%)	0	100
Parliamentary representation (%)	0	50
<b>JUSTICE</b>		
Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	0	100
Access to justice (score)	0	4
Maternal mortality (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)	4	500
Son bias (ratio)	1.10 <sup>a</sup>	1.00
<b>SECURITY</b>		
Intimate partner violence (%)	50 <sup>a</sup>	0
Community safety (%)	0	100
Political violence targeting women (PVTW events per 100,000 female population)	1.5 <sup>a</sup>	0
Proximity to conflict (% of women within 50 km)	100 <sup>a</sup>	0

a. Worst-case scenario (the smaller, the better).

Note: See statistical table 1 for definitions and data sources for the indicators.

Source: Authors.

Aggregation entails two steps. First, the normalized indicators (scores) are aggregated for each dimension into a dimensional subindex (figure A1.1). Arithmetic means are used to aggregate indicator scores within each dimension because the indicators can be considered complementary. The relative weight of each indicator in a dimension is inversely proportional to the number of indicators in that dimension.

- *Inclusion subindex* = (Education score + Financial inclusion score + Employment score + Cellphone use score + Parliamentary representation score) ÷ 5.
- *Justice subindex* = (Absence of legal discrimination score + Access to justice score + Maternal mortality score + Son bias ) ÷ 4.
- *Security subindex* = (Intimate partner violence score + Community safety score + Political violence targeting women score + Proximity to conflict score) ÷ 4.

Then, the subindices are aggregated by geometric mean across all three dimensions into the WPS Index:

- *WPS Index* = (Inclusion subindex)<sup>1/3</sup> × (Justice subindex)<sup>1/3</sup> × (Security subindex)<sup>1/3</sup>.

The geometric mean reduces the degree of substitutability between dimensions and ensures, for example, that a 1 percent decline in the inclusion subindex has the same impact on the WPS Index as a 1 percent decline in the justice or security subindex. The geometric aggregation is more respectful of the intrinsic differences across the dimensions than a simple average, and in that way, it captures the importance of performing well on all three dimensions.

WPS Index scores rounded to three decimals are used to generate country rankings, so countries with the same score at three decimal places are listed with tied rankings. Countries with the same tied rankings are ordered alphabetically.

Statistical table 1 presents weighted aggregates for country groups—Developed Countries, regions, and Fragile States. Countries in the Fragile States group are also included in their regional group. The weights are population counts corresponding to the definition of each indicator. For example, for education, the weights are the female population ages 25 or older; for intimate partner violence, the weights are female population ages 15–49; for parliamentary representation, the weights are the total number of parliamentary seats (available from the International Parliamentary Union Parline database); and so on.

### ***A worked-through example: Rwanda***

We use Rwanda's indicators and scores from statistical table 1 to illustrate the computation of the WPS Index (table A1.3).

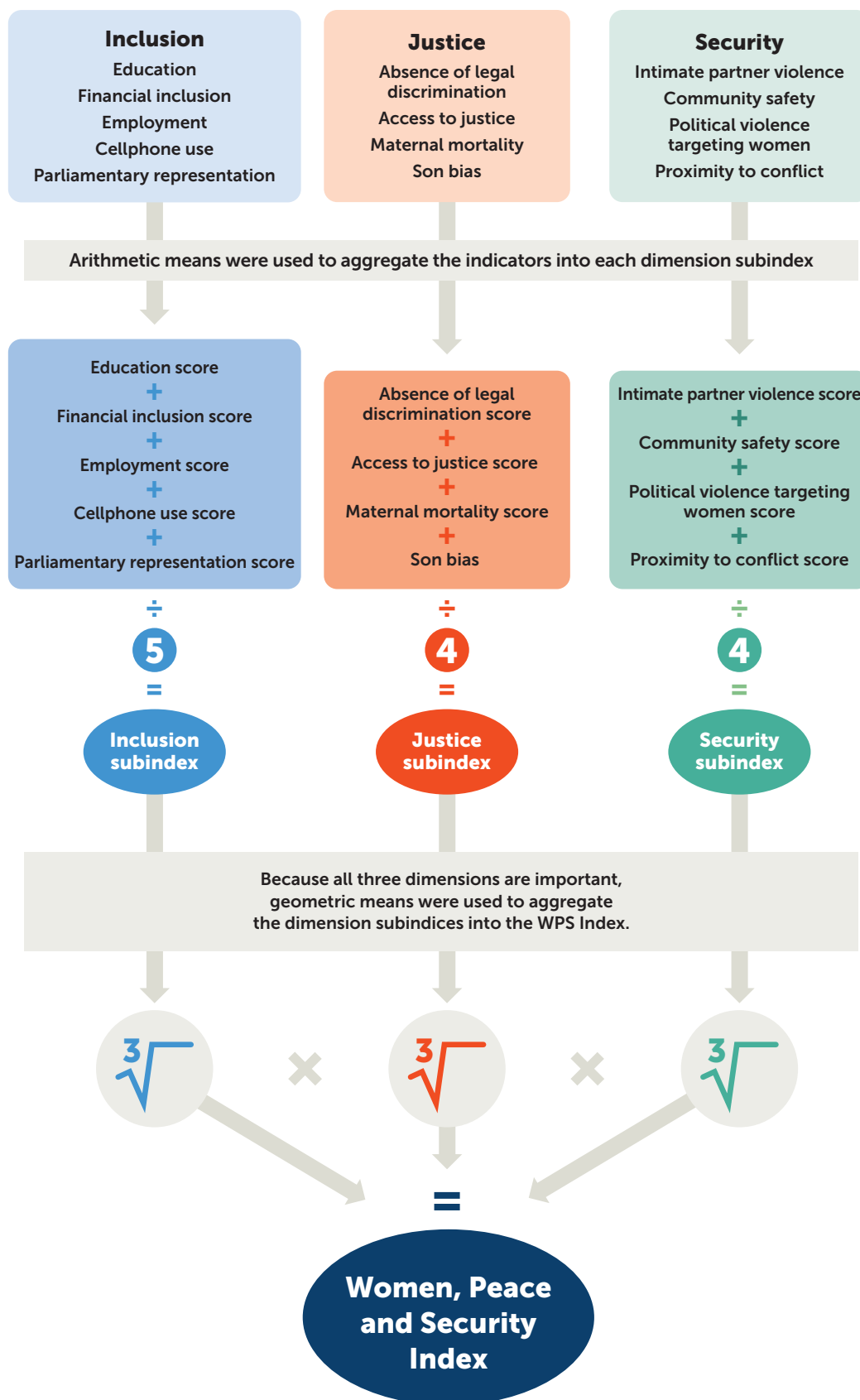
The arithmetic mean of the indicator scores within each dimension is used to aggregate the normalized indicator scores for the dimension, and then the geometric mean is used to aggregate the three subindices into the WPS Index, as follows:

#### ***Inclusion subindex***

- Education =  $(4.5 - 0) \div (15 - 0) = 0.299$
- Financial inclusion =  $(45.0 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = 0.450$
- Employment =  $(51.3 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = 0.513$
- Cellphone use =  $(67.0 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = 0.670$
- Parliamentary representation =  $(61.3 - 0) \div (50 - 0) = 1.000$

**Inclusion subindex score =  $(0.299 + 0.450 + 0.513 + 0.670 + 1.000) \div 5 = 0.586$**

FIGURE A1.1 Construction of the WPS Index



Source: Authors.



### Justice subindex

- Absence of legal discrimination =  $(91.9 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = 0.919$
- Access to justice =  $(2.22 - 0) \div (4 - 0) = 0.555$
- Maternal mortality =  $(500 - 229) \div (500 - 4) = 0.546$
- Son bias =  $(1.026 - 1.000) \div (1.050 - 1.000) = 0.520$

**Justice subindex score =  $(0.919 + 0.555 + 0.546 + 0.520) \div 4 = 0.635$**

### Security subindex

- Intimate partner violence =  $(50 - 23.5) \div (50 - 0) = 0.530$
- Community safety =  $(76.0 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = 0.760$
- Political violence targeting women<sup>4</sup> =  $[[1 - (0.014 \div 1.5)^{1/3}]^3 = 0.495$
- Proximity to conflict =  $1 - (17.6 \div 100) = 0.824$

**Security subindex score =  $(0.530 + 0.760 + 0.495 + 0.824) \div 4 = 0.652$**

**Rwanda's WPS Index score =  $(0.586 \times 0.635 \times 0.652)^{1/3} = 0.624$**

### Calculating correlation of WPS Index with other indices:

We calculated the correlation of the WPS Index with other indices by recording scores across countries available in both the WPS Index and the other national outcome index (such as the Fragile States Index), and then calculating the correlation coefficient in Excel for the two indices. We did several data checks to ensure there was no discrepancy in scores. We used scores for indices, not ranks, to reflect actual results in terms of outcomes rather than the order of countries on the indices. For example, our correlation analysis between the WPS Index and the Human Development Index examines if (and how strongly) women's status moves together with human development, rather than comparing an individual country's rankings on the two indices.

### Treatment of missing values

Consistent with previous editions, missing values are imputed using one of three methods:

- Taking data on the same indicator from an earlier period than the specified period, thus using a reference interval rather than a reference year; for example, education data could be from 2019–2023 or employment data could be from 2020–2024.
- Using data from alternative sources, such as the United Nations Development Programme's estimate of mean years of schooling for the adult population when data are missing from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's education database, or using a comparable national dataset that had not been incorporated into our global source.
- Applying an average of the average values of an indicator (mean imputation) for the country group or region to which the country with a missing value belongs, such as the Developing Countries group, income group, Human Development Index group, or Fragile States group.<sup>5</sup>

These approaches are widely considered to be transparent and easy to explain or replicate. Table A1.4 summarizes the imputation methods used in calculating the 2025/26 WPS Index.

Our goal is to maximize the number of countries that can be included in the WPS Index while limiting the number of countries with imputed average values. This yielded a rule that a country could have at most 4 indicators (out of 13) with imputed average values and no more than 2 indicators with imputed average

**TABLE A1.3 Illustration of 2025/26 WPS Index aggregation using Rwanda as an example**

DIMENSION AND INDICATOR	VALUE
<b>INCLUSION</b>	
Education (years)	4.5
Financial inclusion (%)	45.0
Employment (%)	51.3
Cellphone use (%)	67.0
Parliamentary representation (%)	61.3
<b>JUSTICE</b>	
Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	91.9
Access to justice (score)	2.219
Maternal mortality (deaths per 100,000 live births)	229.0
Son bias (ratio)	1.026
<b>SECURITY</b>	
Intimate partner violence (%)	23.5
Community safety (%)	76.0
Political violence targeting women (PVTW events per 100,000 female population)	0.014
Proximity to conflict (%)	17.6

Note: See statistical table 1 for the definitions and sources of the indicators.  
Source: Authors.

values per dimension. For example, Cuba is excluded from the 2025/26 WPS Index because it lacks data for five indicators: three in the inclusion dimension (financial inclusion, employment, and cellphone use) and one in each of the other two dimensions: absence of legal discrimination in the justice dimension and community safety in the security dimension.

Before the methodological update in the 2023/24 WPS Index, we allowed for a maximum of three imputations per country across the 11 indicators at the time. When we expanded to 13 indicators, we increased the maximum to four accordingly. In the 2025/26 WPS Index, 24 countries had one imputed average value, 8 countries had two, 14 countries had three, and 11 countries had four.

### Multidimensionality and internal consistency

For the previous 2023/24 WPS dataset, the internal consistency analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha (CA) analysis. We repeated the same analysis this year and found that the results hold. The CA correlation analysis revealed that the WPS data set was highly reliable in measuring several aspects of the status of women in society, with the overall value of  $CA = 0.863$ .

For the current dataset, the inclusion dimension was the most (internally) consistent ( $CA = 0.779$ ), followed by the moderately-high-consistently justice dimension ( $CA = 0.630$ ) and the moderately consistent security dimension ( $CA = 0.579$ ) in 2024/25. Other results were also the same as for 2023/24: the inclusion dimension was more (internally) consistent without parliamentary representation, the justice dimension was more consistent without son bias, and the inclusion of intimate partner violence neither increases nor decreases the internal consistency of the security dimension.

**TABLE A1.4 Summary of imputation methods used in calculating the 2025/26 WPS Index dataset for ranked countries**

DIMENSION AND INDICATOR	EARLIER DATA	ALTERNATIVE SOURCE	IMPUTED AVERAGES
<b>INCLUSION</b>			
Education	3	52	2
Financial inclusion	23		19
Employment	27	3	9
Cellphone use	2		30
Parliamentary representation	6	4	
<b>JUSTICE</b>			
Absence of legal discrimination			2
Access to justice			9
Maternal mortality		1	2
Son bias			
<b>SECURITY</b>			
Intimate partner violence		24	29
Community safety	9		23
Political violence targeting women			
Proximity to conflict			1

Source: Authors.

**TABLE A1.5** Internal consistency of the 2023/24 and 2025/26 WPS Index datasets (Cronbach's alpha)

WPS INDEX	OVERALL WPS INDEX DATASET	INCLUSION DIMENSION	JUSTICE DIMENSION	SECURITY DIMENSION
2023/24	.846	.775	.541	.629
2025/26	.864	.779	.630	.579

Source: Authors.

The CA analysis confirmed that the structure of the WPS Index with three dimensions satisfies the basic requirements for internal consistency and reliability in measuring different aspects of women's status in society. The values of the CA analysis for the entire dataset and for the dimensions (except security) for the current WPS dataset increased slightly compared with the values of the CA analysis of the 2023/24 WPS dataset (table A1.5).

As with the 2023/24 WPS Index, we also conducted principal component analysis (PCA) of the 2025/26 WPS Index dataset. The first three principal components account for about 41 percent of the variation in all 13 indicators in the current dataset (a decrease from the 2023/24 dataset). The number of principal components continues to coincide with the number of dimensions to which the 13 indicators are assigned. PCA also confirmed the findings from the CA analysis that the parliamentary representation and son bias indicators were only weakly related to the corresponding principal component. Full details of the CA and PCA analyses are available on request by emailing [giwps@georgetown.edu](mailto:giwps@georgetown.edu).

### Limitations

Our analysis has some limitations. To produce an index that scores and ranks countries across the world on several indicators, we rely mostly on global datasets, which rarely include intersectional data and often fail to capture the nuances of several phenomena. For instance, Burundi's high employment rate does not account for the informality or holistic economic status of women—both men and women work in Burundi because unemployment is not an option.<sup>6</sup> In Lebanon, the mean years of schooling indicator does not capture exclusion of girls who are refugees or of other nationalities. In Ukraine our indicators do not capture the rise in racial discrimination or the disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups of issues such as displacement, poverty, and unemployment.

## APPENDIX 2

# Country groups and regions

The 2025/26 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index ranks 181 countries and economies, 4 more than the 177 in the 2023/24 WPS Index and 28 more than the 153 in the inaugural 2017/18 WPS Index. This year's edition adds Federated States of Micronesia, Grenada, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Palau but excludes Equatorial Guinea, which was ranked in the 2023/24 WPS Index, because of unavailable or outdated data. The four indicators added in the 2023/24 edition are included again in the current WPS Index: access to justice and maternal mortality in the justice dimension and political violence targeting women and proximity to conflict in the security dimension.

All 181 countries in the 2025/26 WPS Index belong to one of seven country groups or regions classified by the United Nations Development Programme: Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Developed Countries, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

As in previous editions, countries are also classified by human development category (based on Human Development Report Office classifications) and by income level and fragility and conflict status (based on World Bank classifications). One exception is Venezuela, which the World Bank previously classified as an upper-middle-income country but now leaves unclassified because recent data are unavailable.<sup>1</sup> Based on GDP per capita values published by the International Monetary Fund in the April 2025 *World Economic Outlook*, we classified Venezuela as a lower-middle-income country.<sup>2</sup> Results from a 2022 paper by the Inter-American Development Bank estimating Venezuela's GNI per capita for 2015–21 also suggest that Venezuela has been a lower-middle-income country since at least 2018.<sup>3</sup> Countries in each country group and region are shown in table A2.1.

TABLE A2.1 COUNTRY GROUPS AND REGIONS

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES			
Australia			
Austria			
Belgium			
Canada			
Denmark			
Finland			
France			
Germany			
Greece			
Iceland			
Ireland			
Israel			
Italy			
Japan			
Luxembourg			
Malta			
Netherlands			
New Zealand			
Norway			
Portugal			
Singapore			
South Korea			
Spain			
Sweden			
Switzerland			
United Kingdom			
United States			
FRAGILE STATES <sup>a</sup>			
Afghanistan			
Burkina Faso			
Burundi			
Cameroon			
Central African Republic			
Chad			
Comoros			
Congo			
Democratic Republic of the Congo			
Ethiopia			
Federated States of Micronesia			
Guinea-Bissau			
Haiti			
Iraq			
Kiribati			
Kosovo			
Lebanon			
Libya			
Mali			
Marshall Islands			
Mozambique			
Myanmar			
Niger			
Nigeria			
Palestine			
Papua New Guinea			
São Tomé and Príncipe			
Solomon Islands			
Somalia			
South Sudan			
Sudan			
Syrian Arab Republic			
Timor-Leste			
Ukraine			
Venezuela			
Yemen			
Zimbabwe			
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA			
Albania			
Armenia			
Azerbaijan			
Belarus			
Bosnia and Herzegovina			
Bulgaria			
Croatia			
Cyprus			
Czechia			
Estonia			
Georgia			
Hungary			
Kazakhstan			
Kosovo			
Kyrgyzstan			
Latvia			
Lithuania			
Moldova			
Montenegro			
North Macedonia			
Poland			
Romania			
Russian Federation			
Serbia			
Slovakia			
Slovenia			
Tajikistan			
Türkiye			
Turkmenistan			
Ukraine			
Uzbekistan			
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC			
Cambodia			
China			
Federated States of Micronesia			
Fiji			
Hong Kong			
Indonesia			
Kiribati			
Lao PDR			
Malaysia			
Marshall Islands			
Mongolia			
Myanmar			
Palau			
Papua New Guinea			
Philippines			
Samoa			
Solomon Islands			
Taiwan			
Thailand			
Timor-Leste			
Tonga			
Vanuatu			
Viet Nam			
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN			
Argentina			
Barbados			
Belize			
Bolivia			
Brazil			
Chile			
Colombia			
Costa Rica			
Dominican Republic			
Ecuador			
El Salvador			
Grenada			
Guatemala			
Guyana			
Haiti			
Honduras			
Jamaica			
Mexico			
Nicaragua			
Panama			
Paraguay			
Peru			
Puerto Rico			
Suriname			
Trinidad and Tobago			
Uruguay			
Venezuela			
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA			
Algeria			
Bahrain			
Djibouti			
Egypt			
Iraq			
Jordan			
Kuwait			
Lebanon			
Libya			
Morocco			
Oman			
Palestine			
Qatar			
Saudi Arabia			
Somalia			
Sudan			
Syrian Arab Republic			
Tunisia			
United Arab Emirates			
Yemen			
SOUTH ASIA			
Afghanistan			
Bangladesh			
Bhutan			
India			
Iran			
Maldives			
Nepal			
Pakistan			
Sri Lanka			
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA			
Angola			
Benin			
Botswana			
Burkina Faso			
Burundi			
Cabo Verde			
Cameroon			
Central African Republic			
Chad			
Comoros			
Congo			
Côte d'Ivoire			
Democratic Republic of the Congo			
Eswatini			
Ethiopia			
Gabon			
Gambia			
Ghana			
Guinea			
Guinea-Bissau			
Kenya			
Lesotho			
Liberia			
Madagascar			
Malawi			
Mali			
Mauritania			
Mauritius			
Mozambique			
Namibia			
Niger			
Nigeria			
Rwanda			
São Tomé and Príncipe			
Senegal			
Seychelles			
Sierra Leone			
South Africa			
South Sudan			
Tanzania			
Togo			
Uganda			
Zambia			
Zimbabwe			

a. Classified by the World Bank Group in fiscal year 2025 as fragile and conflict-affected; see definition here: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragility/conflictviolence/brief/classification-of-fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations>.

Note: Only countries ranked on the index are included.





## Notes

### Foreword

1. Throughout the report, the In Women's Own Words boxes feature direct quotations from women who participated in the GIWPS 2025 Women, Peace and Security Survey (Baekgaard, Rickenbrode, and Smith 2025). For more information visit: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/women-peace-and-security-survey/>.

### Overview

1. GIWPS and PRIO 2023.
2. Rustad 2025.
3. Rustad 2025.
4. UNHCR 2023; United Nations Secretary-General 2023.
5. Högladh 2023. Raleigh and Kishi 2024.
6. Palestine and Myanmar are two of five countries globally with 100 percent of the population living in proximity to conflict; the other three are Burundi, Eswatini, and Lebanon. Rustad 2025.
7. Coalition for Genocide Response et al. 2025; Human Rights Watch 2023.
8. Gebremichael et al. 2023.
9. Human Rights Watch 2022b.
10. Ebead 2025.
11. World Bank 2025; Peard 2024.
12. Based on number of violent events targeting civilians in the preceding year; ACLED reports 81 percent of Palestine's population is exposed to conflict (52 conflict events per day on average), and in 2024, there were 35,000 recorded fatalities.
13. UNOHCHR 2024.
14. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2025.

15. IPC 2025.
16. UNFPA Palestine 2025.
17. DTM 2025.
18. UNICEF 2025b.
19. UNHRC 2024.
20. Davies et al. 2024; Raleigh and Kishi 2024.
21. OCHA 2025.
22. UN Women 2024a.
23. Mezha 2024; United Nations 2025; United Nations Ukraine 2025.
24. UNHCR 2025.
25. Hagan 2025; UN Women 2024b.
26. Mass atrocities encompass war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide; see Coalition for Genocide Response, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Health Professionals Network for Tigray, et al. 2025.
27. ICC 2023.
28. Based on classifications from the United Nations Development Programme for human development and the World Bank for country income levels (UNDP 2025 and World Bank 2025b).
29. Rounded to the nearest integer from 89.9 percent, Burundi's score ties Solomon Islands' at 90 percent. The Solomon Islands' employment indicator is based on the latest available data from 2013.
30. WHO 2025.

### Chapter 1

1. The quotations throughout this report ("In women's own words") are from responses to the survey by women peacebuilders. GIWPS 2025.
2. For a full list of countries in each country group and region, see appendix 2.
3. Tornaghi 2023.

4. Rosch 2022.
5. The impact of any policies introduced by the newly elected Costa Rican government of 2022 might not have been captured by data up until 2023. Moreover, Uruguay was listed as one of the countries that saw the greatest improvement in women's financial inclusion between 2014 and 2021 in the 2023/24 WPS Index report.

## Chapter 2

1. UN Women n.d.
2. Empirical Studies of Conflict 2025; Nussio and Ugarriza 2021.
3. PeaceWomen n.d.
4. Baekgaard, Rickenbrode, and Smith 2025.
5. GIWPS n.d.
6. George et al. 2025a.
7. Calculations from the GIWPS's Commitment 2025 project using the PA-X databases. There were 8 peace agreements with gender provisions out of a total of 62 in 2000 and 20 agreements with gender provisions out of a total of 43 in 2013. Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform 2025.
8. Ellis and Lopez-Claros 2024.
9. United Nations General Assembly 2001, 2024.
10. UN Women Arab States 2022; United Nations Sudan 2023.
11. UN Women Arab States 2022; United Nations Sudan 2023.
12. Engler, Braghieri, and Manzur 2020.
13. Leaders from 189 countries and more than 30,000 activists came together at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 to create a roadmap for achieving equal rights for women and girls. Known as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, this roadmap became the most widely endorsed global agenda for women's rights (UN Women n.d.).
14. UN Women 2025a.
15. UN Women 2025a.
16. Sáez and Braunschweiger 2025.
17. World Bank 2024.
18. Throughout the report, the In Women's Own Words boxes feature direct quotations from women who participated in the GIWPS 2025 Women, Peace and Security Survey (Baekgaard, Rickenbrode, and Smith 2025). For more information visit: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/women-peace-and-security-survey/>.
19. Equality Now 2025.
20. Pruth and Zillén 2023.
21. Baek et al. 2024.
22. Baek et al. 2024.
23. Equality Now 2025.
24. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights 2021; Human Rights Watch 2022a.
25. Civicus 2024; Firmin, Pousadela, and Tiwana 2025.
26. Peele 2023.
27. Civil Georgia 2024.
28. Based on time series analysis of the maternal mortality ratio indicator by the authors and research team. United Nations Statistics Division n.d. (indicator 3.1.1).
29. UNICEF 2025a.
30. Ortiz and Ensor 2023.
31. Ellis and Lopez-Claros 2024.
32. World Economic Forum 2025.
33. Calculations from the GIWPS's C-25 project using the PA-X databases (13 peace agreements with gender provisions out of 55 agreements in total in 2023). Wise 2024.
34. Ellis and Lopez-Claros 2024; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2025; Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform 2025.
35. Chehab 2024; George et al. 2025b; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2024; United Nations Peacekeeping 2025.
36. Elhag 2024.
37. World Bank 2024.
38. World Bank 2024.
39. World Bank 2024.
40. There have been 34 gender equality reforms introduced by 18 countries since 2021. World Bank 2023.
41. Kaptan 2020.
42. Vetter and Smith 2025.
43. Villellas, Urrutia, and Villellas 2024; Kaptan 2020.
44. George et al. 2025c. For more about ODA, see OECD (n.d.).
45. Shifman et al. 2022.
46. OECD 2025.
47. UN Women 2025b.
48. Humanity United 2025.
49. This includes halting family planning services that provided 47 million women and girls worldwide with contraceptive care. Sully, Owolabi, and Rosenberg 2025.
50. UNFPA 2025a.
51. UNFPA 2025b.
52. Carlitz 2022.
53. Monin 2024.
7. There were 68,102 state-based battle-related deaths in 2024, and about 236,000 since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, as reported by PRIO (2025).
8. Högladh 2023; Raleigh and Kishi 2024.
9. Three other countries in which 100 percent of the population lives in proximity to conflict are Burundi, Eswatini, and Lebanon (Rustad 2025b).
10. The data highlighted here are likely to be underreported given conditions of conflict, and newer data are expected to demonstrate an even higher human cost.
11. Coalition for Genocide Response et al. 2025; Human Rights Watch 2023.
12. Gebremichael et al. 2023.
13. Human Rights Watch 2020, 2022.
14. Ebead 2025.
15. UN Women and UNDP 2022.
16. WPHF 2025.
17. Peard 2024; World Bank 2025.
18. Based on number of violent events targeting civilians in the preceding year; ACLED reports 81 percent of Palestine's population is exposed to conflict (52 conflict events per day on average), and in 2024, there were 35,000 recorded fatalities.
19. According to Palestinian Health Authorities and as reported in OHCHR (2024) and OCHA and Reuters (Raleigh and Kishi 2024).
20. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2025.
21. IPC 2025.
22. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights 2025.
23. UNFPA Palestine 2025.
24. DTM 2025.
25. UNICEF 2025b.
26. UNHRC 2024.
27. SIHA 2025.
28. International IDEA 2024.
29. International IDEA 2024.
30. Davies et al. 2024; Raleigh and Kishi 2024.
31. OCHA 2025.
32. UN Women 2024a.
33. Mezha 2024; United Nations 2025; United Nations Ukraine 2025.
34. UNHCR 2025.
35. Hagan 2025; UN Women 2024b.
36. Mass atrocities encompass war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. For additional information, see <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/defining-the-four-mass-atrocity-crimes/>.
37. The United Nations defines *genocide* as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national,

## Chapter 3

1. GIWPS and PRIO 2023.
2. ACLED 2024.
3. Rustad 2025a.
4. Authors calculations based on CIESIN 2018; Rustad 2025b; UNDESA 2024; Uppsala Conflict Data Program 2025.
5. UNHCR 2023; United Nations Secretary-General 2023.
6. Rustad 2025a.

ethnic, racial, or religious group (UNOGPRP 2025).

38. Human Rights Watch 2020; OTP 2024.
39. ICC 2024.
40. OHCHR 2024.
41. Mishra 2025; Naar and Dahir 2025. Although both the United Arab Emirates and Sudan are signatories to the 1948 Genocide Convention, the ICJ lacks jurisdiction since the United Arab Emirates opted out of a key clause that allows countries to sue each other at the ICC.
42. ICC 2023.
43. ICC 2025.
44. Cocciarelli and Stensrud 2024.

## Chapter 4

1. Equal Measures 2030 2024.
2. US Department of State 2019.
3. Center for Preventative Action 2024.
4. IISS 2023.
5. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies 2024.
6. Khelifi, d'Hauthuille and Nevola 2022.
7. In 2017/18, the mean years of schooling for Yemen's female population was only 1.7 years, financial inclusion stood at 1.7 percent (based on the most recent available data from 2014), women's employment at 5.5 percent, and parliamentary representation at 0.5 percent. Only 37 percent of women reported feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live, while 91.5 percent lived within 50 kilometers of a conflict area.

## Chapter 5

1. Including integrating the Istanbul Convention into the constitution, revising the criminal code, and implementing two frameworks on protection against gender-based violence: the National Strategy on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women for 2022–2026, and the 2023 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence; UN Women 2024c.
2. OSCE 2019; UN Women 2024c.
3. GAP Institute 2023.
4. Banjska et al. 2022.
5. Marshall Islands, ranked 101st, was excluded from the 2023/24 WPS Index rankings because of problems with data availability.
6. Backhaus and Loichinger 2022.
7. ILO 2024; Malta et al. 2021.
8. UN HLP-WEE 2023.
9. UN Women Arab States 2025.
10. The United States has also performed poorly on maternal mortality and political violence targeting women since the inaugural index in 2017/18.

11. Mimbela and Schifeling 2025; The White House 2025a.
12. Hsu 2025; The White House 2025b.
13. US Department of Homeland Security 2025.
14. US Department of Justice 2025.
15. It was ranked the second-worst after Yemen in 2017/18.

## Chapter 6

1. Democratic Republic of the Congo was also one of the countries that made it out of the bottom 10 performers on the overall WPS Index.
2. Primary education usually takes six years, while secondary education takes another six (World Bank 2025b, 2025c).
3. We used the UNDP human development and World Bank income classifications (UNDP 2025).
4. Rounded to the nearest integer from 89.9 percent, Burundi's score ties Solomon Islands' at 90 percent. The Solomon Islands' employment indicator is based on the latest available data from 2013.
5. World Bank 2025d.
6. ILOSTAT 2025; Kanyange 2022.
7. Moghadam 2023.
8. Bussolo and Rexer 2025; Raiser 2023.
9. The global database used for this indicator was not updated at the time the WPS Index was being produced.
10. Legal discrimination encompasses several dimensions. For example, it includes women's ability to secure employment compared with men, an area in which Norway has a perfect score of 1, to restrictions on women's ability to travel outside the home compared with men's, where Afghanistan scores 0.
11. Goitam 2025.
12. Nord et al. 2025.
13. Chamorro 2025.
14. Chamorro 2025.
15. WHO 2025a.
16. Jawad et al. 2021.
17. Tekka et al. 2025.
18. Cusick 2025.
19. United Nations South Sudan 2025.
20. WHO South Sudan 2025.
21. The 2023/24 WPS Index report discussed various factors contributing to high maternal mortality ratios for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including limited healthcare access, high fertility rates, and high child marriage rates.
22. The latest available data. WHO 2025b.
23. WHO 2025b.
24. MMEIG 2025.
25. Duff-Brown 2025.
26. United States Institute of Peace 2025.
27. The countries are the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi

Arabia, Kuwait, Somalia (Fragile State), Libya (Fragile State), Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, and Iraq (Fragile State).

28. Moreira and Ceccato 2024.
29. McCarthy and Lloyd 2023.
30. Measured as number of events per 100,000 women. Women are assumed to be the target of political violence when the victims of an event are all women or girls, when a majority are women or girls, or if the primary target was a woman or girl. The indicator focuses on the political motivation of the perpetrator and does not refer solely to women in politics.
31. ACLED 2022.
32. Defined as the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools to cause harm (Baekgaard 2024).
33. A measure of the proportion of the country that experiences a high level of violence. Dookeran et al. 2025.
34. Halimi 2025.
35. Zeqiri 2024.
36. Thakur and Finkel 2024.

## Appendix 1

1. Klugman, Rodríguez, and Choi 2011; OECD 2008; UNDP 2014.
2. Greco et al. 2019.
3. The indicator value for Trinidad and Tobago is 3.0, but as discussed in chapter 6, this is likely an outlier, and so this value is not used as the upper bound.
4. Because of the large number of observed zero values, the distribution of this indicator is skewed to the right. Normalization for this indicator is best done using the cubic norm transformation:

$$\text{Normalized indicator score} = \left(1 - \left(\frac{\text{actual value}}{1.2}\right)^{1/3}\right)^3$$

where 1.5 is the upper bound.

5. Imputed averages are the last resort to filling the gaps in the WPS Index dataset. Preference is always given to reasonably outdated values, especially for slow-moving indicators. Slightly outdated values better approximate the correlation structure of the dataset than the imputed averages.
6. Danish Trade Union Development Agency 2022. Over two-thirds of the country's population lives below the national poverty line (ILO 2022).

## Appendix 2

1. World Bank 2025e.
2. IMF 2025.
3. Maldonado and Olivo 2022.





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## Alphabetical key to countries and ranks on the 2025/26 WPS Index

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE
181	Afghanistan	.279	49	Grenada	.787	63	Palau	.739
68	Albania	.731	144	Guatemala	.561	167	Palestine	.469
123	Algeria	.621	154	Guinea	.527	86	Panama	.696
133	Angola	.601	159	Guinea-Bissau	.508	160	Papua New Guinea	.507
47	Argentina	.791	52	Guyana	.770	54	Paraguay	.768
56	Armenia	.762	176	Haiti	.399	80	Peru	.701
11	Australia	.896	144	Honduras	.561	131	Philippines	.607
9	Austria	.898	41	Hong Kong	.809	27	Poland	.854
111	Azerbaijan	.653	32	Hungary	.832	26	Portugal	.861
55	Bahrain	.765	2	Iceland	.932	76	Puerto Rico	.707
155	Bangladesh	.526	131	India	.607	70	Qatar	.723
42	Barbados	.807	96	Indonesia	.678	43	Romania	.801
63	Belarus	.739	128	Iran	.608	75	Russian Federation	.718
7	Belgium	.912	158	Iraq	.510	121	Rwanda	.624
104	Belize	.667	13	Ireland	.891	89	Samoa	.685
138	Benin	.587	84	Israel	.697	124	São Tomé and Príncipe	.620
99	Bhutan	.673	39	Italy	.811	63	Saudi Arabia	.739
80	Bolivia	.701	79	Jamaica	.703	110	Senegal	.657
59	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.753	22	Japan	.866	29	Serbia	.844
108	Botswana	.658	88	Jordan	.686	40	Seychelles	.810
119	Brazil	.632	72	Kazakhstan	.722	133	Sierra Leone	.601
38	Bulgaria	.814	152	Kenya	.542	17	Singapore	.884
160	Burkina Faso	.507	112	Kiribati	.652	46	Slovakia	.797
174	Burundi	.407	82	Kosovo	.700	14	Slovenia	.889
62	Cabo Verde	.741	70	Kuwait	.723	108	Solomon Islands	.658
104	Cambodia	.667	84	Kyrgyzstan	.697	170	Somalia	.455
171	Cameroon	.451	83	Lao PDR	.698	113	South Africa	.648
16	Canada	.885	17	Latvia	.884	37	South Korea	.815
179	Central African Republic	.362	141	Lebanon	.575	173	South Sudan	.411
165	Chad	.476	126	Lesotho	.614	25	Spain	.862
63	Chile	.739	157	Liberia	.512	77	Sri Lanka	.706
89	China	.685	128	Libya	.608	177	Sudan	.397
149	Colombia	.551	15	Lithuania	.887	51	Suriname	.779
135	Comoros	.590	6	Luxembourg	.918	3	Sweden	.924
140	Congo	.583	168	Madagascar	.466	19	Switzerland	.877
34	Costa Rica	.824	150	Malawi	.549	178	Syrian Arab Republic	.364
137	Côte d'Ivoire	.589	67	Malaysia	.738	27	Taiwan	.854
48	Croatia	.788	78	Maldives	.704	89	Tajikistan	.685
52	Cyprus	.770	164	Mali	.478	121	Tanzania	.624
32	Czechia	.832	30	Malta	.841	57	Thailand	.761
175	Democratic Republic of the Congo	.405	101	Marshall Islands	.670	102	Timor-Leste	.668
1	Denmark	.939	166	Mauritania	.475	143	Togo	.562
146	Djibouti	.560	94	Mauritius	.679	89	Tonga	.685
97	Dominican Republic	.675	147	Mexico	.558	89	Trinidad and Tobago	.685
127	Ecuador	.612	36	Moldova	.821	100	Tunisia	.671
125	Egypt	.617	44	Mongolia	.799	106	Türkiye	.664
87	El Salvador	.691	61	Montenegro	.743	74	Turkmenistan	.720
11	Estonia	.896	102	Morocco	.668	138	Uganda	.587
148	Eswatini	.556	151	Mozambique	.548	116	Ukraine	.645
156	Ethiopia	.516	172	Myanmar	.442	20	United Arab Emirates	.872
113	Federated States of Micronesia	.648	128	Namibia	.608	23	United Kingdom	.864
68	Fiji	.731	120	Nepal	.631	31	United States	.840
5	Finland	.921	8	Netherlands	.905	35	Uruguay	.822
23	France	.864	9	New Zealand	.898	98	Uzbekistan	.674
94	Gabon	.679	107	Nicaragua	.659	115	Vanuatu	.646
153	Gambia	.528	163	Niger	.492	118	Venezuela	.638
45	Georgia	.798	162	Nigeria	.495	73	Viet Nam	.721
21	Germany	.869	49	North Macedonia	.787	180	Yemen	.323
117	Ghana	.639	3	Norway	.924	142	Zambia	.566
60	Greece	.752	58	Oman	.755	135	Zimbabwe	.590
			169	Pakistan	.462			

Possible scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1.



Since 2017, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, in collaboration with the Peace Research Institute Oslo, has produced the biennial *Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index*, which ranks countries globally on women's status across three key dimensions: inclusion, justice, and security. Drawing on data for 13 robust and globally recognized indicators, the WPS Index is the only tool that brings together insights from gender, development, and peace and security—providing a uniquely comprehensive picture of women's well-being. The WPS Index's findings underscore the importance of a multidimensional understanding of women's status and the urgent need to invest in women to advance the well-being of all people and societies. Our data reaffirm that societies where women's status is higher are also more peaceful, prosperous, and resilient, including in the face of climate change and economic shocks.

This report reveals how countries and regions that once performed better on the WPS Index are now backsliding, while temporal trends show stagnation in women's status worldwide. As wars and conflicts reach a historic peak, progress on women's rights seems perilously close to a historic low.

And yet there is hope. The WPS Index shows that some of the greatest improvements in women's status have come from the most challenging and conflict-affected places. From Congo to Yemen, women have continued to organize, lead, and rebuild despite unimaginable hardship. *Their persistence is a powerful reminder that change is possible even in the darkest moments, but it should not be theirs alone to catalyze.*

The WPS Index remains a vital tool for governments and policymakers to identify and address areas of progress and decline; for academics and researchers to deepen understanding of global and regional trends; and for civil society, activists, and storytellers to amplify women's voices and press decision-makers to act. But this year, on the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the WPS Index also serves as a reminder for all these agents of change: *women have not given up—and neither should the rest of us.*



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