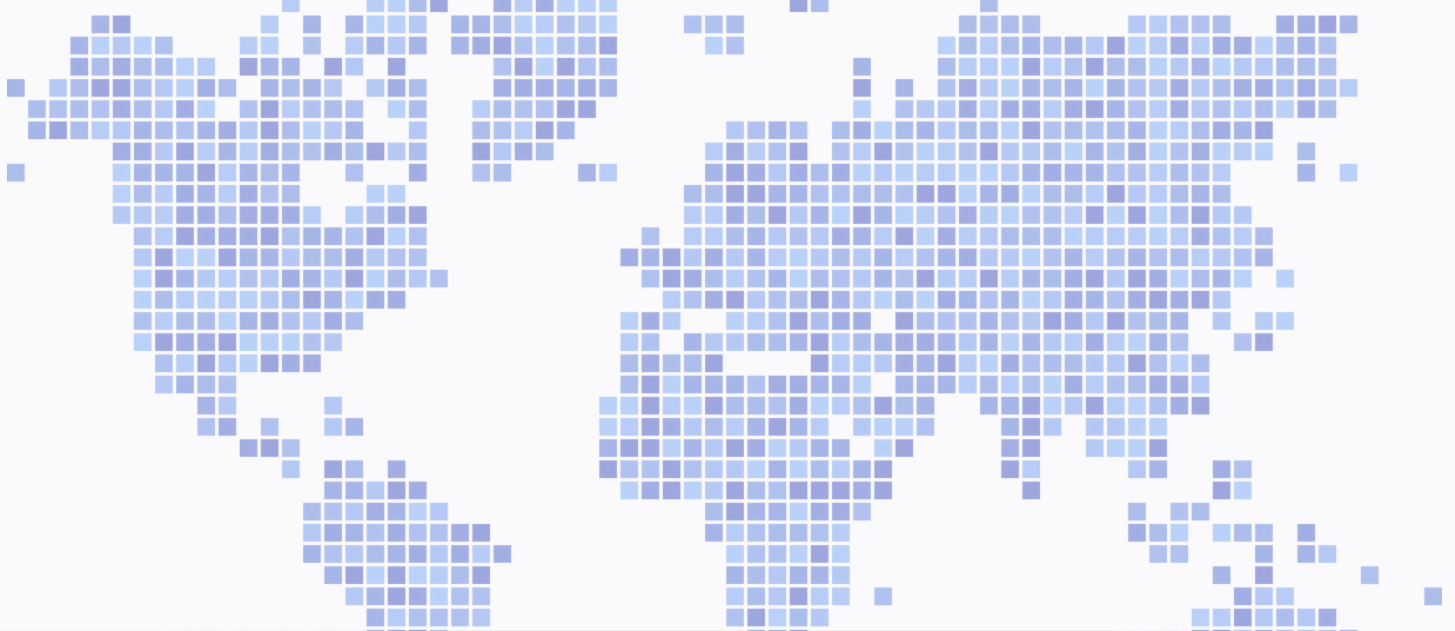




WIIS

WOMEN IN
INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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Washington DC, 20036
www.wiisglobal.org

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A NOTE FROM OUR CEO AND
PRESIDENT

A Message from Dr. Lauren Van Metre



This year marked a decisive turning point for Women in International Security (WIIS). We are operating in a moment of profound transformation. Long-standing security paradigms are shifting, funding landscapes are tightening, and the threats facing democratic societies are multiplying. Yet, WIIS has remained resilient — anchored by a committed Board, a highly capable staff and a vibrant global network of affiliates who continue to demonstrate why this organization occupies a unique place in the international security landscape.

In 2025, we launched an ambitious institutional pivot to ensure WIIS is prepared not only to withstand these challenges, but to lead through them.

Our new strategic plan sharpens our focus on emerging and transnational threats.

From analysis and policy input on hybrid and disinformation operations to climate instability and illicit networks, we are reinforcing our commitments to inclusive, evidence-driven security. We are investing in rigorous research, expanding global partnerships and strengthening the next generation of security leaders.

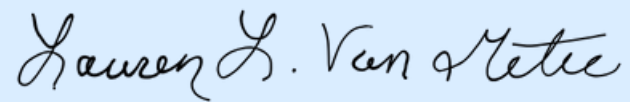
We are continuing to solidify our financial footing. Through coordinated Board and staff outreach, a fall membership drive and targeted donor appeals, we are building the resources needed to support WIIS's next chapter.

This is the kind of disciplined governance and community-wide mobilization that will define our work going forward.

Looking ahead, we will deepen collaboration with our rapidly expanding number of affiliates across Africa, Europe and the Asia-Pacific. We will launch a revitalized mentorship program to build the pipeline of future security leaders. These initiatives reflect a singular goal: to build a global WIIS network capable of shaping security policy and practice at the moment it is most needed.

The year ahead will bring challenges, but it will also bring opportunity—opportunity to lead, to innovate, and to shape a global security environment that reflects our values. Thank you for being part of WIIS's continued evolution and impact.

With gratitude and determination,



Dr. Lauren Van Metre
President and CEO
Women in International Security





Founded in 1987, **Women In International Security** (pronounced “Wise”) is an international organization of experts. We are a leading institution advancing comprehensive approaches to today’s biggest emerging security threats, including cyber threats, climate-related instability, and nuclear risk. Through research, advocacy, and strategic collaboration, WIIS helps to promote women’s leadership in the international security field and strengthen their agency in addressing transnational security challenges.

We are also an inclusive member community of security professionals looking to build diverse coalitions and drive meaningful change in our fields. WIIS has helped elevate women into leadership at the highest levels of public and private service, including ambassadors, ministers of defense, secretaries of state, special representatives, and senior executives across the U.S., the European Union, NATO, and Fortune 500 companies. Today, WIIS spans more than 50 countries across six continents and includes a network of 15,000+ members committed to transforming global security and shaping a more resilient, inclusive, and peaceful world.

OUR MISSION

WIIS develops global security talent, produces rigorous research, and forges international partnerships to confront a rapidly evolving threat landscape, from disinformation and hybrid conflict to climate pressures and illicit networks.



OUR VISION

A global community of experts strengthened by inclusive, evidence-driven research and analysis to inform policies and decisions that address the challenges of evolving security threats.

WHAT WE DO

We foster a global network of networks with the comprehensive expertise to forge inclusive, evidence-driven solutions to today's complex security challenges.

We elevate and prepare the next generation of security experts and women leaders through professional development, skill-building, mentorship, and inclusive community.

We advance forward-looking global security policy through practical research, high-level convenings, and strategic policy engagement.

OUR TEAM



DR. LAUREN VAN METRE
PRESIDENT AND CEO



DR. KARIN JOHNSTON
DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT



DR. LAYLA HASHEMI
DIRECTOR, PROGRAMS
AND PARTNERSHIPS



MAHATHI AYYAGARI
HOWARD S. BREMBECK
FELLOW, WOMEN, PEACE &
SECURITY



JESSIE STEINHAUER
MANAGER, PROGRAMS AND
PARTNERSHIPS

OUR FELLOWS



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DUILIA TURNER
SENIOR FELLOW



JOAN JOHNSON-FREESE
SENIOR FELLOW



BRENDA OPPERMAN
SENIOR FELLOW &
LEGAL ADVISOR



TAHINA MONTOYA
DEFENSE FELLOW



ELLEN HARING
SENIOR FELLOW



JANA WATTENBERG
SENIOR FELLOW



**LOREDANA
TEODORESCU**
SENIOR FELLOW



**DIORELLA ISLAS
LIMINANA**
SENIOR FELLOW



**ANA LAURA
VELASCO UGALDE**
FELLOW



ANTONIETA RICO
SENIOR FELLOW

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PAMELA AALL
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**NAUREEN CHOWDHURY
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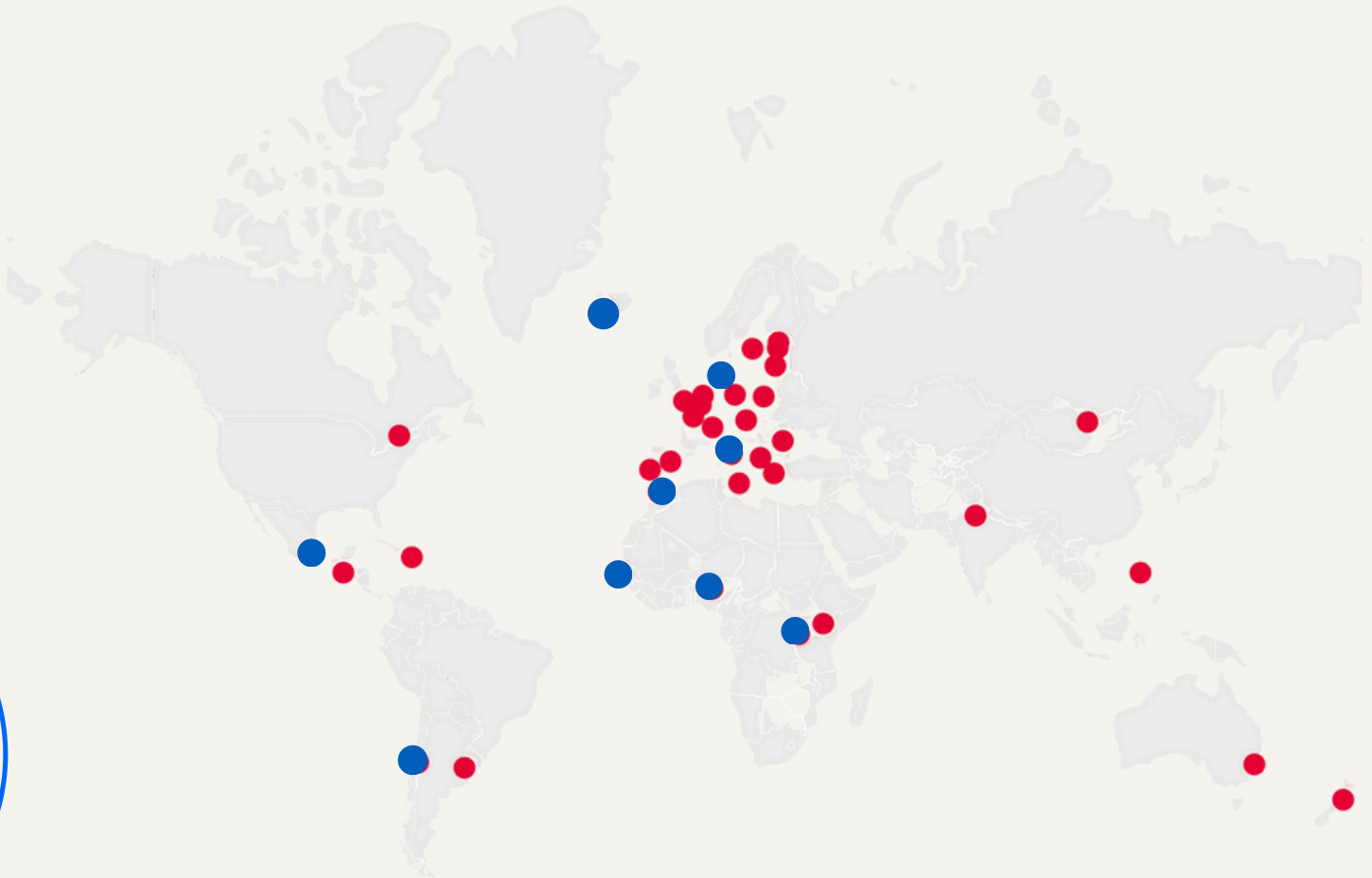
KITTY PILGRIM
BOARD MEMBER



A Network of Networks: Expanding and Diversifying our Reach

In 2025, WIIS strengthened its international identity and affirmed our standing as a truly global organization. We welcomed **9 new affiliates** across Africa, Europe, and Latin America—including **Albania, Chile, Denmark, Iceland, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Senegal**—broadening the expertise, reach, and global impact of the WIIS community.

With affiliates active in over 50 countries, WIIS now functions as a network of networks: a constellation of academics, peacebuilders, cybersecurity and climate experts, and emerging leaders who collectively drive evidence-based approaches on the most pressing security challenges of our time.



Our Impact

- **9 new international affiliates**
- **Network active across 50+ countries**
- **Thousands engaged in research, events, and trainings**

Highlights from Our International Affiliate Network:

WIIS affiliates drove meaningful policy influence and public engagement across a wide spectrum of global security challenges, from climate security to cybersecurity and illicit networks to inclusive peace operations.

Through vibrant convenings, cross-border collaborations, cutting-edge research, and leadership development initiatives, WIIS affiliates showcased the power of coordinated global action and solidarity.

Across regions, WIIS affiliates published timely analyses, delivered high-impact trainings, convened dialogues, and shaped national, regional, and international peace and security strategies.

Their work underscores the expanding influence of the WIIS network and its role as an engine of transformative security innovation.

Defense & Regional Security Engagement

WIIS Spain (SWIIS)

Co-organized the First Hemispheric Convention on Security and Defense with the Inter-American Defense College Foundation (IADCF) and ASOCID-Ecuador. The convention fostered dialogue on global defense and security challenges, promoted inclusivity, encouraged cultural engagement, and strengthened hemispheric cooperation and institutional partnerships.

WIIS Germany

Led discussions on critical infrastructure protection at the Protekt2025 conference through the WIIS.de Forum, spotlighting women's expertise in international security. The forum complemented a high-level roundtable on current security challenges and included sessions on forward-looking topics such as AI-driven flood forecasting, emerging regulatory frameworks, and innovative protection strategies.





WIIS AUS

Co-hosted the panel event “Voices of the Future: Young Women Shaping the AUKUS Discourse” at the Australian National University, in partnership with Girls Run the World (GRTW) and the ANU Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs. Opening remarks by WIIS-A and GRTW set the stage for a panel discussion featuring representatives from GRTW, The Asia Group, the British High Commission, and the US Embassy. Panelists explored AUKUS Pillars 1 and 2 (sharing advanced military technologies) and highlighted the vital role of women in shaping the alliance’s future.

WIIS Horn of Africa (HOA)

Co-hosted workshops on countering violent extremism (CVE) and participated in the Aswan Forum, engaging global leaders and practitioners in discussions on the critical role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism. Through the “From Insight to Impact” discussion, participants reflected on progress and strategies to localize the WPS agenda, translating commitments into concrete power, financing, and leadership for women in peacebuilding and recovery efforts.

From Insight to Impact: Twenty-Five Years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

04:30 PM - 06:00 PM

<p>Moez Doraid UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States</p> <p>Libakiso Matlho Executive Secretary, the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development</p> <p>Eva Suarez Head, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation</p> <p>Fauziya Abdi President, Women in International Security, Horn of Africa</p>	<p>Chitose Noguchi Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme Egypt Country Office</p> <p>Ortilia Anna Maunganidze Head of Special Projects, Office of the Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies</p> <p>Moderated by: Gustavo De Carvalho Senior Researcher, African Governance and Diplomacy Programme, South African Institute of International Affairs</p>
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Conflict Resolution & Mediation

WIIS Nigeria

WIIS Nigeria's Safiya Ibn Garba facilitated the 3Ps Peacebuilding Project Practice Academy, an interactive, four-month course designed to strengthen practitioners' skills in peacebuilding project design, community engagement, and impact measurement. WIIS members received a special registration discount.



WIIS Italy

In partnership with Women for Peace and Participation, WIIS Italy hosted a meeting with Afghan leaders under the "Strategizing a Seat at the Table Initiative (SSTI)," coordinated by Loredana Teodorescu and Quhramaana Kakar. Over three days, participants developed strategies to ensure the meaningful participation of Afghan women in political, peace, and security processes, sharing their recommendations and reflections with Italian and international officials.



WIIS Rwanda

Hosted a dynamic workshop bringing together female artists to explore how creative expression can advance the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. The session strengthened understanding of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and equipped participants to use art to promote gender equality, grassroots peacebuilding, and advocacy around UNSCR 1325. Watch the event [here](#).



Public Policy Engagement

WIIS Canada

Launched the **Bylines & Frontlines** podcast to elevate gender-responsive perspectives in international security. Through conversations with thought leaders and practitioners, the series examines emerging challenges, innovative solutions, and the role of women shaping global security debates.

WISCOMP (WIIS India)

Translated research into actionable policy insights by publishing two editions of its journal **Peace Prints** this year—one co-created with Afghan women peacebuilders and another marking 25 years of the WPS agenda.

WIIS Italy

To mark the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, WIIS Italy launched the **#25YearsOfWPS** blog series, examining progress, persistent gaps, and future directions for WPS implementation in Italy and globally, while amplifying diverse expert and practitioner perspectives.

WIIS Latvia

Hosted a conversation with the President of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu, on strengthening regional leadership in the WPS agenda. This timely discussion brought together security professionals, civil servants, NGOs, and activists working on women's rights, gender-based violence, and women's empowerment.



Elevating the Next Generation

WIIS Poland

Participants of WIIS Poland's mentorship program took part in the **CyberSec Expo & Forum** in Kraków, one of Central and Eastern Europe's leading cybersecurity events. The forum brought together global experts, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss pressing digital security challenges. WIIS Poland mentees engaged in high-level debates, explored cutting-edge policy developments, and connected with leaders in the field, gaining invaluable experience and professional exposure.



WIIS Brussels

Launched a new round of its mentorship program, supporting women working across international relations, security, and defense. The program offers tailored opportunities to strengthen skills, seek guidance, and navigate career challenges. Through one-on-one mentorship and dynamic group sessions, participants gain insights from seasoned professionals across EU institutions, NATO, academia, and the public and private sectors. These exchanges create a vibrant learning community that empowers emerging leaders to advance in their fields and build lasting networks.





Elevating and preparing the next generation

A core pillar of the WIIS mission is nurturing the next generation of women leaders in international security. In 2025, we expanded our professional development and training opportunities, strengthened our institutional and university partnerships, and invested in emerging experts navigating rapidly evolving security domains.

Through a robust portfolio of career workshops, book talks, networking opportunities, and member services, WIIS helped women gain visibility, strengthen their skills, and access pathways into leadership.

This year, we launched the **Professional Plus (+) Private Sector membership tier** and laid the groundwork for our **global mentorship program**, set to launch in 2026. Members also benefited from exclusive training opportunities and access to a broad range of professional development courses – further solidifying WIIS as a central pipeline for talent in the international peace and security field.

Our Impact

- Hundreds of members engaged through professional development sessions, networking, and skill-building workshops
- Launch of the Professional Plus (+) Private Sector membership tier and increased private sector engagement
- New mentorship program launching 2026





Launched Institutional Partnerships with Universities

Launch of WIIS-FPGS at American University, School of International Studies, Department of Foreign Policy and Global Security (FPGS)

WIIS launched a new institutional membership with American University's FPGS Department in October 2025. The partnership provides 50 graduate students with WIIS memberships—including mentorship, training opportunities, and access to a global community of peace and security experts. Together, WIIS and AU FPGS are cultivating the next generation of leaders advancing inclusive policy and global governance.



Bring WIIS to Your Organization

WIIS offers institutional memberships and partnerships for universities, think tanks, nonprofits, and companies committed to advancing women's leadership and inclusive peace and security. Institutional membership provides customized access to WIIS benefits for your employees, staff, faculty, and students – designed to align with your organization's goals and size.

WIIS works closely with each partner to create a tailored benefits package, which may include multiple memberships, internship placement opportunities, virtual and in-person networking, and dedicated workshops.

*Interested in bringing WIIS to your company or campus?
[Learn more](#) about WIIS Institutional Membership opportunities.*

Strengthened Community and Connection

WIISup Wednesday

Our monthly virtual meetups connected members across continents, fostering collaboration and shared learning across the global network. Our WIISup Wednesdays also featured key guest speakers across peacebuilding, WPS, and resilience-building specializations, including, Safiya Ibn Garba, Ella Lamakh, and Chris Bosley.

Securi-Tea

These in-person gatherings at the WIIS Global office in Washington, DC brought together students and professionals for meaningful conversations and community building.

Summer Internship with TFAS

WIIS welcomed two interns during the summer, Kaylyn Oh and Jocelynn Stevenson, as part of a partnership with The Fund for American Studies (TFAS). Oh and Stevenson made valuable contributions to WIIS' work across publications, strategic communications, and the WIIS member experience.



Expanded Professional Pathways

Professional Plus (+) Membership Launch

This tier is tailored for corporate, consulting, and private-sector professionals seeking to grow their expertise and network at the intersection of gender and security. Members receive:

- Exclusive cross-sector networking opportunities
- Tailored access to WIIS expert rosters
- Collaboration channels focused on global security challenges

WIIS Mentorship Program (Launching 2026)

WIIS is building a new mentorship program that will connect emerging professionals with experienced leaders across defense, diplomacy, tech, academia, and civil society.

Increased Access through our Gift-A-Membership Campaign

Through our Gift-A-Membership initiative, WIIS expanded access for students, early-career professionals, and members from underrepresented regions. This year alone, our generous donor base gifted 12 memberships across all membership levels.



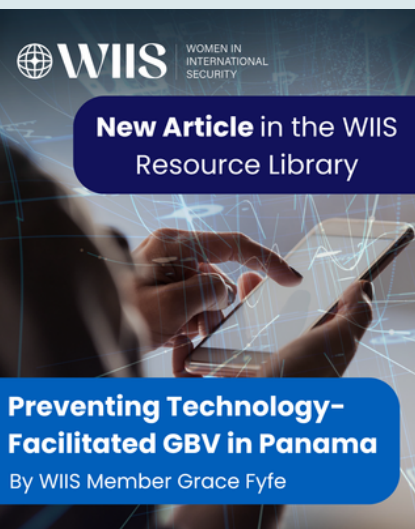


Built Skills for Career Growth Across Sectors

WIIS delivered hands-on career workshops designed to strengthen members' professional capabilities and support career growth.



WIIS strengthened members' career readiness through targeted professional development, hosting résumé and interview workshops that equipped participants to navigate today's challenging job market. Members gained practical strategies to translate expertise across sectors, highlight transferable skills, refine and pivot their professional materials, and build confidence through tailored feedback and hands-on interview practice led by career experts.



Elevated Emerging Experts

The WIIS New Voices series amplified the perspectives of early-career scholars on topics such as tech-facilitated gender-based violence, WPS implementation in diverse regional contexts, and emerging cyber risks, promoting visibility for the next generation of gender and security thinkers.

Check out Our Recent Publications

Shaping Global Security Policy, Practice, & Research

In 2025, WIIS stood at the forefront of shaping global security debates through authoritative research, high-level convenings, and strategic policy engagement.



1325@25



Our flagship initiative, **1325@25**, mobilized global stakeholders to reflect on the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the WPS agenda and chart a bold, future-focused path for implementation. WIIS convened diplomats, military leaders, civil society organizations, scholars, private sector professionals, and activists to renew and reimagine WPS in an era of hybrid threats, disinformation, climate stress, and rising authoritarianism.



The 1325@25" Conference

On November 12, 2025, WIIS Global convened the full-day conference event, ***The Future of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda: Advancing Innovation, Resilience, and Collective Action***, marking the culmination of the 1325@25 Initiative. Nearly 200 participants from embassies, government agencies, civil society, academia, the military, and the private sector joined in-person and online to assess the state of WPS and chart pathways for its future.

The conference examined WPS implementation amid emerging threats and political headwinds, fostered cross-sector collaboration within the DC WPS community, and elevated diverse international perspectives and next-generation leadership. Speakers underscored that in an era of heightened militarization and democratic backsliding, WPS is not peripheral to security strategy but a core framework for prevention, participation, protection, and recovery—essential to countering challenges such as gendered disinformation, shrinking civic space, and attacks on women's political participation.

The convening provided a vital forum for reflection, connection, and collective strategy, leaving participants energized to strengthen the WPS movement and advance a more peaceful, democratic, and resilient world.





1325@25 Activities

UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69)

WIIS co-sponsored a high-level, closed-door roundtable, “Past Reflections and Future Visioning on the 25th Anniversary of the WPS Agenda,” in partnership with the International Peace Institute and the Permanent Missions of Denmark, Luxembourg, Colombia, and Sierra Leone. Former WIIS CEO Ariela Blätter also spoke at “Women, Conflict, and Peace: A Universal Feminist Vision,” amplifying the essential role of women’s leadership in peace processes. Together, these sessions convened representatives from the United Nations, civil society, academia, and government to craft bold strategies for strengthening gender equality and reinvigorating WPS implementation.



Scan the QR Code to visit the 1325@25 Initiative website and learn more about our work!

Policy Briefs

WIIS elevated critical perspectives on the future of WPS through a series of thought-provoking policy briefs, including:

- If You Want Peace, Prepare for War with the Patriarchy — Dr. Hannah Neumann
- The WPS Agenda Beyond 2025: Time for a WPS Treaty — Chantal de Jonge Oudraat & Michael E. Brown

WIIS Voices

Through the #WIISVoices campaign, WIIS amplified member perspectives from across the globe, capturing reflections on how the WPS agenda has shaped local contexts over the past 25 years and aspirations for its future.

Framers of 1325 Series

WIIS published a special series of essays from the original architects of UNSCR 1325, offering insights, reflections, and forward-looking guidance for reimagining the WPS agenda. Scan the QR code to the left to access the essays.



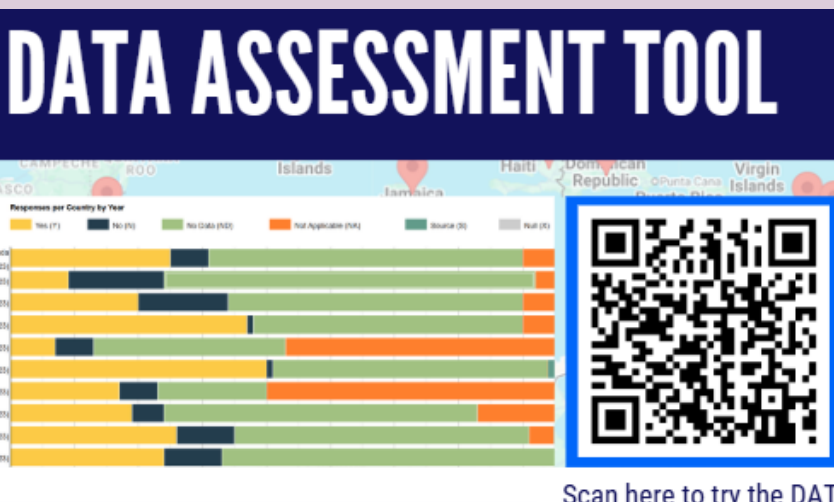
Advanced Forward-Looking Research, Policy, and Practice Impact

In 2025, WIIS advanced forward-leaning research and evidence-driven policy engagement that pushed the boundaries of traditional security thinking. From climate insecurity and illicit economies to cyber warfare and hybrid threats, WIIS produced analysis that clarified emerging risks, shaped strategy, and informed real-world decision-making across regions.

WIIS continued to serve as a vital bridge-builder, linking women leaders across sectors, amplifying local expertise in global forums, and translating research into actionable policy.

Through this work, WIIS is redefining global security practice and ensuring that inclusive, gender-responsive approaches shape both today's policies and tomorrow's security strategies.

Led Evidence-Based Research



In March 2025, WIIS launched the **Data Assessment Tool (DAT)** in partnership with U.S. SOUTHCOM, providing the first regional assessment of gender integration in Latin American and Caribbean security institutions. The DAT is already informing security-sector reforms and strengthening institutional capacity across the region. Learn more [here](#)!

Facilitated Strategic Convenings

International Women's Day Dialogue

WIIS, alongside the Athena Initiative, convened Dr. Michael Brown, Neela Ghoshal and others for a dialogue addressing the global backlash against women and the implications for democratic stability and international security.



Published Timely Analysis

In 2025, WIIS Global experts contributed cutting-edge analysis on international security and gender equality, solidifying WIIS's reputation as a hub of thought leadership. Select publications include:

- *Busting Myths About Women, Peace & Security* — Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese
- *Rethinking WPS in the Middle East and North Africa* — Maryam Rezaeizadeh
- *The Gender and Security Agenda* — Dr. Chantal de Jonge Oudraat & Dr. Michael E. Brown
- *Combating Gender-Based Violence through Arms Control* — Inaara Ali
- *China, Latin America, and the United States: Geopolitical Impacts and New Challenges* — Dr. Karin Johnston
- *Intersectionality in Gender-Responsive Formerly Armed Actor Reintegration* — Mahathi Ayyagari and Jonathan Röders
- *The Ethical Failure: Gender Exploitation and Moral Accountability in UN Peacekeeping Operations* — Meherun Nesa

Organized Book Talks with Leading Experts

WIIS Book Talks explored how leadership, identity, and power shape global security.

- *Leadership in War and Peace: Masculine and Feminine Approaches* featured **Dr. Joan Johnston-Freese**, WIIS Senior Fellow, who examined the impact of gendered leadership models on conflict and peacebuilding.
- *Gender, Race, and Power: Examining International Relations through an Intersectional Lens* brought together **Joyce Kaufman** and **Kristen Williams** to analyze how race, gender, and power intersect in international relations, underscoring the importance of inclusive approaches.

WIIS Staff Roundup



WIIS President & CEO Dr. Lauren Van Metre joined The Just Security Podcast, alongside Ella Lamakh, Founder of the Democracy Development Center, to discuss Ukrainian civilian mobilization since Russia's full-scale invasion. The conversation highlighted how volunteers, especially women, have played a vital role in sustaining Ukraine's resilience and survival.

WIIS Director of Programs and Partnerships Dr. Layla Hashemi spoke on a panel organized by ASIS International's Women in Security Community, offering insights on transnational crime and security risks and highlighting how WPS principles apply in private-sector and physical security contexts.

Howard S. Brembeck WPS Fellow Mahathi Ayyagari shared insights at WIIS Global's 1325@25 conference on how political backlash shapes WPS implementation, highlighting four key strategies for strengthening multilateral action on the WPS agenda.

WIIS experts, including **Development Director Dr. Karin Johnston**, and Fellows Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese and Duilia Mora Turner, presented at Florida International University's Hemispheric Security Conference. Their panel, "Whole of Society Approaches to Security," demonstrated applying WPS-aligned solutions to hemispheric threats.

Looking Ahead: Our Strategic Pivot for a New Security Landscape

In September 2025, WIIS completed a major strategic planning process, which positions the organization for long-term impact in an era of profound geopolitical and technological change. Building on the deep expertise and global reach of the WIIS network, we are charting a bold course for the future.

The Three Pillars of Our Strategic Plan

1. Reclaiming Security through an Inclusive Lens: WIIS will center its research, programming, and global advocacy on emerging and interconnected security challenges, where women's thought leadership is essential to effective solutions. Priority areas include:

- Hybrid and cyber threats, disinformation, and democratic resilience
- Emerging technologies, innovation, and defense transformation
- Transnational crime, trafficking, and illicit networks
- Climate insecurity and resource scarcity

2. Diverse Geopolitical Engagement: WIIS will deepen and expand its engagement in the transatlantic region, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific, leveraging the strength of affiliate-led expertise and expanding partnerships with regional women's networks and security institutions. This global engagement strategy ensures that the WIIS network remains responsive to shifting geopolitical dynamics and grounded in regional perspectives.

3. Building WIIS Hubs and Strengthening Infrastructure: WIIS will continue investing in the next generation of leaders through expanded mentorship programs, the development of professional and university hubs in the United States, and enhanced coordination across its international affiliates. These hubs will:

- Strengthen the pipeline from academia to the security workforce;
- Foster collaborative research and learning; and
- Anchor WIIS' presence in priority regions.





WIIS

WOMEN IN
INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY



Join us in building an inclusive and secure future

Our greatest strength is our global community—experts, policymakers, peacebuilders, journalists, technologists, and emerging leaders who drive change in their fields. In 2025, WIIS demonstrated that when networks connect across borders and disciplines, they become catalysts for systemic transformation.

As WIIS embarks on its next chapter, we remain guided by a clear purpose: ensuring that diverse perspectives shape every dimension of global peace and security, and that emerging leaders have the tools, networks, and support needed to build more resilient, inclusive, and peaceful societies.

Your support powers everything WIIS does. Your contribution today helps shape the future of global security.

WIIS is a 501(c)3 organization and donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law.



Make a Contribution

Become a Member

OUR DONORS

With gratitude and thanks

These generous foundations and organizations helped power our work this year.



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