

# Advancing WPS and Gender Perspectives in IHL: Moving from Analysis to Implementation

April 2025

## About the project

Despite recognition of the importance of gender perspectives in conflict and humanitarian response, there remains a significant gap between states' normative commitments to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and their practical application in military doctrine and operations governed by International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Gender perspectives are understood, at times, by militaries as relevant to operational effectiveness, but rarely as a factor in IHL decision-making. WPS training and support programmes are rarely directed at Military Legal Advisors. The IHL and WPS practitioner communities remain largely separate, with IHL and WPS considerations siloed.

There is now research and guidance concerning the parameters and implications of gender and WPS perspectives on IHL. This needs to be developed in a manner that considers emerging threats, engages military legal experts, and further documents state practice. This will serve as a foundation to practically implement WPS and gender analysis in military doctrine, military manuals, military training, planning processes and operations.

DCAF, with support from the Government of Liechtenstein, has launched an initiative to support these processes.

## Key Objectives

The key objectives of the "WPS and Gender Perspectives in IHL" project are to:

- Establish and develop an **IHL Community of Practice for WPS** to connect experts across academia, policy, and military sectors.
- Provide **militaries and policymakers** with a repository of model language and good practices for integrating gender perspectives into IHL processes.

Through the creation of a Community of Practice, the project will create spaces for legal scholars, gender experts and military legal and gender practitioners to collectively examine the integration of WPS and gender perspectives in IHL. Peer exchange roundtables, both thematic and context-specific, will enable the Community to share emergent state practice, consider new and emerging challenges, and build professional collaboration.

The roundtables will, moreover, contribute to developing a series of Policy Briefs and a Compendium of *successful approaches* for implementation of WPS commitments in IHL aspects of military operations and *model texts* for potential incorporation in military manuals and doctrine.

## Project activities

- **x4 Thematic In-Person Expert Roundtables** on specific issues pertinent to WPS, gender and IHL. Expert roundtables will enable CoP participants to engage with key global experts, military and academic, and to share their own nation's practices.

The proposed subjects of the expert roundtables are:

- Integrating Gender Perspectives in Civilian Harm Mitigation frameworks. To take place on 22 May 2025, alongside a Side Event to the UN's Protection of Civilians Week in New York.
  - IHL and Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Operations (co-organized with/in partnership with the ICRC)
  - Integrating Gender Perspectives in Military AI and other Emerging Battlefield Technologies
  - Operationalizing the Convergence of IHL and WPS (co-organized with/in partnership with the ICRC).
- **x2 Country-Level Roundtables** on the topic of "Gender and IHL on the Modern Battlefield", examining the gendered dynamics of conflict and military response.
- In partnership with the ICRC, the development and publication of a [Compendium of successful approaches](#) in integrating WPS commitments and gender perspective in IHL aspects of military operations, with model texts for military manuals and/or doctrine. To be published in late 2026.

## How you can get involved

As a member of the IHL Community of Practice for WPS, you would commit to:

- ✓ Attending at least one of the expert roundtables
- ✓ Contributing practical examples, research or other contributions to Policy Briefs and/or the Compendium of good practices
- ✓ Sharing the project's Policy Briefs and Compendium with your colleagues and network
- ✓ Actively promoting the integration of WPS and gender perspectives in IHL in your own work (advisory, teaching, research, policy development etc.)

### Interested in joining the IHL Community of Practice for WPS?

If you are interested in sharing, learning and contributing to this work, please do get in touch. We are particularly seeking:

- legal advisors and experts from militaries that have done substantive work on gender and WPS, or that see themselves as leaders in IHL
- scholars who have worked on WPS/gender and IHL issues
- organisations documenting the gendered impacts of military operations under IHL
- participants from Majority World countries.

To express interest in joining the IHL Community of Practice for WPS, please get in touch with Dr Megan Bastick, Project Lead, at [m.bastick@dcaf.ch](mailto:m.bastick@dcaf.ch)

## About DCAF

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and their people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and gender equality. Since its founding in 2000, DCAF has contributed to making peace and development more sustainable by assisting partner states, and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms. It creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, provides legal and policy advice and supports capacity-building of both state and non-state security sector stakeholders.

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