

Norm Entrepreneurs for Regional Security: Indonesia, WPS, and ASEAN Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

More than two decades after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda remains contested terrain where global norms meet the complexities of regional and domestic politics. This article examines Indonesia's dual role as a norm entrepreneur in the WPS field: domestically, through the iterative development of its National Action Plan on Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social Conflict (RAN P3AKS), and regionally, through its diplomatic leadership in shaping the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (RPA WPS, 2022). Drawing on qualitative document analysis, process tracing, and comparative data from ASEAN member states, the study argues that Indonesia's norm entrepreneurship has been structurally bifurcated — ambitious and visible at the international level, yet persistently constrained domestically by patriarchal institutional cultures, resource deficits, and coordination gaps. The analysis situates this bifurcation within Finnemore and Sikkink's norm life cycle and Acharya's framework of norm localization, demonstrating that civil society organizations have been indispensable but structurally limited norm entrepreneurs within Indonesia's WPS architecture. The article contributes to scholarship on norm diffusion in Southeast Asia and offers policy-relevant insights on the conditions under which regional WPS diplomacy translates — or fails to translate — into substantive domestic change.

Keywords: Women Peace and Security; norm entrepreneurship; ASEAN; Indonesia; regional diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on October 31, 2000, constituted a normative watershed in global security governance. For the first time, the UN Security Council formally acknowledged that armed conflict bears a differentiated impact on women and girls and that women's participation in peace processes is not a peripheral consideration but a structural imperative for durable peace. Over the subsequent two decades, nine additional resolutions collectively known as the WPS architecture extended this normative project into the domains of sexual violence in conflict, women's roles in mediation, the gendered dimensions of counter-terrorism, and the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. As Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 895) observed in their foundational work on international norm dynamics, norms do not transplant themselves; their diffusion requires the sustained effort of "norm entrepreneurs" who leverage organizational platforms and moral agency to persuade others of the norm's validity and urgency.

In Southeast Asia, this process of norm diffusion has unfolded unevenly, shaped by the structural logic of a regional organization — the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — that prioritizes consensus, sovereignty, and non-interference over normative enforcement. Yet within this constrained architecture, Indonesia has emerged as a remarkably active norm entrepreneur: the only ASEAN member state that championed a multilateral UN Security Council resolution on gender and peacekeeping (UNSCR 2538, adopted in 2020), the architect of one of the region's most institutionally

complex National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS, and a consistent vocal advocate for the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS. Whether this entrepreneurial role translates into measurable normative change — at both the regional and domestic levels — is the central question animating this article.

Existing scholarship on WPS in Southeast Asia has grown considerably since the ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement on WPS in 2017 and the adoption of the ASEAN RPA WPS in November 2022. Scholars including Martel, Mustapha, and Sharma (2021), and True (2016) have charted the diffusion of WPS norms across the Indo-Pacific. However, the specific analytical question of how a single state can simultaneously function as an international norm projector and a domestically constrained norm recipient — what this article terms "bifurcated norm entrepreneurship" — remains undertheorized, particularly in the ASEAN context. This conceptual gap matters because it illuminates why formal policy adoption, even by enthusiastic norm entrepreneurs, does not guarantee substantive implementation.

This article argues three interconnected propositions. First, Indonesia's WPS engagement reflects a sophisticated, multi-level norm entrepreneurship that operates simultaneously at the domestic, ASEAN regional, and global UN levels. Second, this entrepreneurship is structurally bifurcated: Indonesia's international norm projection is not proportionally matched by domestic institutional transformation, creating a gap between diplomatic prestige and ground-level outcomes for women. Third, civil society organizations — particularly women's Islamic networks and human rights bodies — have functioned as critical norm entrepreneurs within the domestic arena, but their influence is structurally capped by limited state resourcing and growing pressure on civic space. The article proceeds as follows: after establishing the theoretical framework, it explains its methodology, analyses Indonesia's WPS architecture and its ASEAN regional activism, places these findings in comparative perspective, and concludes with implications for theory and policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Norm Life Cycle and Norm Entrepreneurship

Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) norm life cycle model remains the most influential constructivist framework for understanding how international norms gain traction. The model identifies three stages: norm emergence, where entrepreneurs use organizational platforms to persuade norm leaders; norm cascade, where a critical mass of states adopt the norm; and norm internalization, where the norm becomes so deeply embedded that it is taken for granted. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 897) defined norm entrepreneurs as "agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior in their community" who actively work to construct shared understandings of what constitutes appropriate state conduct. In the WPS domain, scholars have applied this framework to chart the movement from UNSCR 1325's adoption to the proliferation of National Action Plans — from 4 states with NAPs in 2005 to over 100 by 2023 (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security & Peace Research Institute Oslo [GIWPS & PRIO], 2023).

True and Mintrom (2001) refined this framework by examining how transnational networks facilitate gender norm diffusion across states, demonstrating that participation in international organizations and the presence of domestic women's policy agencies significantly predict the adoption of gender mainstreaming commitments. This transnational network perspective is directly applicable to Indonesia's case, where organizations such as the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN Indonesia) have bridged local community peacebuilding with global WPS normative frameworks. Keck and Sikkink (1998, p. 2) further enriched this literature by theorizing advocacy networks as entities that "multiply the channels of access to the international system," creating what they called the "boomerang pattern" through which international norms can be leveraged to pressure domestic governments.

Norm Localization and the ASEAN Context

Acharya's (2004, p. 239) concept of norm localization offers the most theoretically precise lens for understanding how global WPS norms are received in Southeast Asia. Acharya argues that "local agents reconstruct foreign norms to ensure the norms fit with the agents' cognitive priors and identities," a process he terms "congruence building." In the ASEAN context, this means that global norms — including those enshrined in UNSCR 1325 — do not arrive as blank imperatives but are actively mediated by local actors who selectively emphasize, reframe, and adapt those norms to fit prior institutional commitments. Critically, Acharya (2004) demonstrates that localization is not mere resistance or dilution: it can enhance normative ownership and institutional durability.

Building on this, Acharya's (2011) concept of "norm subsidiarity" captures a related but distinct dynamic, where local actors create new norms — rather than just adapting imported ones — specifically to protect their autonomy from external coercion. This concept is relevant to Indonesia's push for UNSCR 2538 on women in peacekeeping, which can be read not merely as an endorsement of a global agenda but as an effort to carve out a distinctive normative contribution that serves Indonesia's foreign policy objectives as a major troop-contributing country. Taken together, localization and subsidiarity help explain both the form and the limits of ASEAN-level WPS engagement: ASEAN localizes WPS within the "ASEAN Way" architecture of consensus and non-interference, producing frameworks that are normatively legitimate but institutionally non-binding.

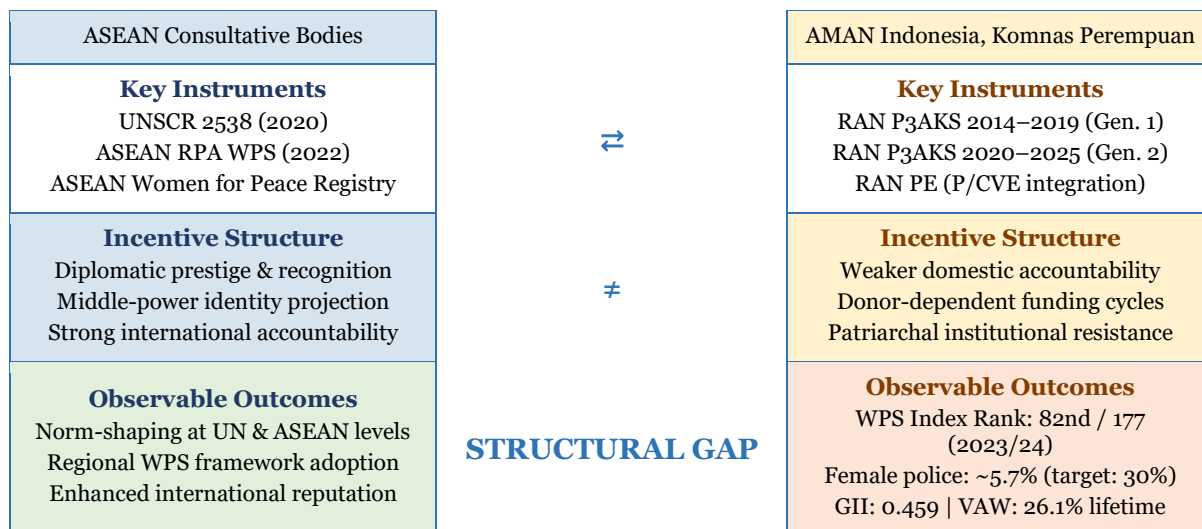
Feminist International Relations and the WPS Critique

Feminist International Relations scholarship provides the critical undergrowth of the WPS enterprise. Tickner (1992, p. 3) famously challenged "the militarized view of security that has been central to realism," arguing that a genuinely inclusive conception of security must account for the structural violence embedded in gender hierarchies. Enloe (2000) demonstrated that militarization is always a gendered process, and that the integration of women into security institutions without transforming their underlying cultures replicates rather than challenges those hierarchies. Shepherd (2008) extended this critique to the WPS agenda itself, cautioning that the framing of women primarily as victims or as instruments of peacebuilding — rather than as full political agents — risks reproducing the very gender hierarchies the agenda claims to dismantle.

These critiques are especially pertinent when evaluating Indonesia's integration of the WPS agenda with its Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) framework. If women's engagement with peace and security is valued primarily as a counterterrorism resource, the broader structural transformation envisioned by feminist IR theory is in danger of being sacrificed on the altar of state security imperatives. As Gayatri & True (2024) argued, this linkage produces a political arrangement in which WPS provides normative legitimacy while counter-terrorism provides the operational logic — raising the risk that women are valued instrumentally rather than as full political agents deserving empowerment on their own terms. The analytical challenge, then, is to trace with precision where norm entrepreneurship deepens gender-transformative change and where it becomes a tool of state legitimation without substantive empowerment.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Bifurcated Norm Entrepreneurship in Indonesia's WPS Engagement





Source: Authors' synthesis drawing on Finnemore & Sikkink (1998), Acharya (2004, 2011), and empirical data cited in this article.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design combining systematic document analysis with process tracing and comparative institutional analysis. The methodological choice reflects the research objective: to trace the mechanisms through which Indonesia's WPS norm entrepreneurship operates across multiple levels of governance and to identify the structural factors that mediate or constrain its effectiveness. Qualitative process tracing is particularly well suited for this purpose because, as Beach and Pedersen (2013, p. 3) explain, it enables researchers "to trace the causal mechanisms that link cause to outcome," which in this case means mapping the pathways from Indonesia's diplomatic investments in WPS to observable changes in policy frameworks and institutional practices.

Primary source materials analyzed include UNSCR 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions, the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022), Indonesia's Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2014 and Coordinating Minister Regulation No. 5 of 2021 (the RAN P3AKS), the ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security (UN Women & USAID, 2021), and the ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement on WPS (ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). Secondary sources include peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, reports from the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, UN Women country briefs, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International annual reviews, and the UNODC-UN Women-INTERPOL report on Women in Law Enforcement in the ASEAN Region (2020).

Comparative data are drawn from the WPS Index 2023/24 (GIWPS & PRIO, 2023), the UNDP Human Development Report 2023/24, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) data on women in national parliaments (2024). These quantitative indicators are used not to produce a ranking exercise but to provide empirical grounding for the qualitative argument: they surface the gap between policy ambition and measurable outcomes that the theoretical framework is designed to explain. The study is deliberately bounded — it does not aspire to a comprehensive assessment of all ten ASEAN member states but rather treats the Indonesia case with analytical depth while using comparative ASEAN data to contextualize and triangulate key findings.

RESULT

Indonesia's WPS Architecture: The RAN P3AKS and Its Evolution

Indonesia's formal engagement with the WPS agenda began in earnest with Presidential Regulation

No. 18 of 2014, which established the first generation of the National Action Plan for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social Conflict, commonly known as RAN P3AKS. This regulation, enacted within the broader framework of Law No. 7 of 2012 on Social Conflict Management, organized Indonesia's WPS commitments around three core pillars: prevention of social conflict, conflict situation handling and protection, and women's and children's empowerment and participation across all phases of conflict. The choice to anchor the NAP within a social conflict statute – rather than a more expansive peacebuilding or foreign policy frame – reflected the initial domestic priority of addressing communal violence and ethnic tensions rather than the full spectrum of peace and security challenges envisioned by UNSCR 1325.

Following a comprehensive evaluation of the 2014–2019 period that identified insufficient inter-agency coordination, limited sub-national implementation, and an overly narrow security conception, the second-generation RAN P3AKS (2020–2025) was adopted through Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs Regulation No. 5 of 2021. This updated framework retained the three original pillars but significantly expanded its scope to encompass emerging threats highly specific to the Indonesian context: the prevention of violent extremism, radicalization, and intolerance; the management of natural resource and land disputes; and the combating of disinformation and digital hoaxes. The integration of P/CVE content – made explicit in the plan's alignment with Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2021 on the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (RAN PE) – reflects Indonesia's genuine P/CVE challenges while simultaneously raising questions about the instrumentalization of women's agency in security governance.

The 2020–2025 RAN P3AKS also made explicit its alignment with Indonesia's international obligations, including UNSCR 1325 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Indonesia through Law No. 7 of 1984. Institutionally, the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs (Kemendo PMK) serves as the lead for the National Coordinating Team, with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KemendPPA) as the primary programmatic arm. The National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) holds a coordinating role in P/CVE-related WPS activities. This multi-agency architecture, while intended to mainstream WPS across government, has in practice generated significant coordination challenges, as each ministry operates under distinct budget lines, performance indicators, and institutional cultures.

Indonesia as International Norm Entrepreneur: UNSCR 2538 and the ASEAN RPA WPS

Indonesia's most consequential act of international WPS norm entrepreneurship was its leadership in the drafting and passage of UNSCR 2538 during its 2019–2020 non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Adopted by consensus on August 28, 2020, UNSCR 2538 specifically addresses the need for greater representation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations, with particular emphasis on uniformed female personnel – a category in which Indonesia, as one of the UN's largest troop-contributing countries, holds a substantial institutional stake. The resolution called on member states to "work to increase the deployment of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations" and urged troop-contributing countries to develop strategies to that end (UN Security Council, 2020, para. 6). Indonesia's Foreign Minister at the time, Retno Marsudi, framed the resolution as part of Indonesia's commitment to mainstreaming gender in multilateral diplomacy – a commitment that positioned Indonesia as a norm-shaping rather than norm-receiving actor on the global stage.

At the ASEAN level, Indonesia's contributions to the creation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (RPA WPS), formally adopted at the ASEAN Summit in November 2022, represent a further dimension of this entrepreneurship. The RPA WPS is the most comprehensive regional WPS framework ever adopted within the ASEAN architecture. Structured

around the four traditional WPS pillars — participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery — plus a fifth operational component on implementation, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation, the document explicitly aims to "mobilize the whole of ASEAN to advance implementation of the WPS agenda" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022, p. 3). The RPA WPS acknowledges non-traditional security threats including climate change, pandemics, violent extremism, and cybersecurity as domains requiring gender-responsive governance — a framing that mirrors Indonesia's own domestic WPS expansion.

The creation of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) in 2018 — a network of women experts available to support ASEAN member states in peace and reconciliation efforts — further illustrates Indonesia's organizational contributions to ASEAN's WPS infrastructure. Former ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi, at the AWPR's launch, emphasized that "women must not be considered as passive recipients of peace dividends but as active contributors to peace processes" (ASEAN-IPR, 2018), a framing that resonated with Indonesia's consistent advocacy for women's agency rather than merely their protection.

Statistical Profile: The Gap Between Ambition and Reality

Quantitative indicators from multiple authoritative sources reveal the structural chasm between Indonesia's normative ambitions and the measurable realities of women's inclusion in its peace and security institutions. In the national parliament (DPR), women hold approximately 21.9% of seats as of December 2024 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024), falling short of the 30% candidate quota established under electoral law. This persistent underrepresentation reflects not merely the inadequacy of formal affirmative action mechanisms but the deeper patriarchal political culture that shapes candidate selection, campaign financing, and voter behavior (ALIGN Platform, 2024).

Within the national police (POLRI), the proportion of female officers (Polwan) stood at approximately 5.7% of total personnel in 2022 — roughly 25,700 officers out of approximately 450,000 — against an official institutional target of 30% (ANTARA News, 2022). In the military (TNI), women constituted approximately 5.5% to 6.4% of Indonesian uniformed personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping missions — well below the UN's target of 15% for female uniformed peacekeepers by 2028 (UN Women Asia-Pacific, 2024). Indonesia's Gender Inequality Index (GII) value was 0.459 in 2022, with Indonesian women's Human Development Index performance standing at 91.86% of that of Indonesian men (UNDP, 2024). The WPS Index 2023/24 ranked Indonesia 82nd out of 177 countries, with an overall score of 0.683, placing it in the third quintile globally (GIWPS & PRIO, 2023). The 2021 National Survey on Women's Life Experience (SPHPN) found that 26.1% of Indonesian women aged 15 to 64 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (UNDP Indonesia, 2024). These statistics do not negate the importance of Indonesia's policy frameworks; they underscore why robust implementation — rather than continued framework elaboration — is the most urgent priority.

Comparative ASEAN Perspective: Diversity in WPS Engagement

Placing Indonesia's WPS trajectory in comparative ASEAN perspective reveals a region of extraordinary normative heterogeneity. Table 1 and Table 2 below synthesize the comparative landscape across all ten ASEAN member states with respect to NAP status and key gender and security indicators. The Philippines remains the regional benchmark for WPS institutionalization, having adopted its first NAP in 2010 and currently implementing its fourth-generation plan (2023–2033), with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) as a dedicated institutional home and a historically robust civil society-state partnership, particularly in Mindanao (UN Women Asia-Pacific, 2016). Vietnam adopted its inaugural WPS NAP for 2024–2030, anchored largely in its expanding contribution to UN peacekeeping and its post-conflict memory politics. Thailand is in the process of developing a NAP, with government and civil society actors having participated in ASEAN-IPR and UN Women's "NAP Academy" training workshops in Bangkok

in 2024 (UN Women Asia-Pacific, 2024).

At the other extreme, Myanmar's February 2021 military coup has produced what the GIWPS & PRIO (2023) WPS Index identifies as the most acute WPS regression in the region, with Myanmar ranked 165th globally – a decline driven by catastrophic protection failures, the systematic targeting of women human rights defenders, and the total foreclosure of women's political participation. Singapore, notably, ranks 15th globally in the WPS Index (GIWPS & PRIO, 2023), achieved without a publicly designated NAP – a reminder that WPS Index performance reflects underlying structural conditions that formal policy frameworks can address but cannot themselves create. The divergences in women's parliamentary representation across the region are equally telling: Vietnam leads ASEAN at 30.2%, followed by the Philippines at 27.3% and Singapore at approximately 29.3%, while Malaysia stands at 13.5% and Cambodia at 13.6% (IPU, 2024). Indonesia's figure of 21.9% places it in a mid-range that accurately reflects its overall developmental trajectory.

Table 1. Comparative Overview of WPS National Action Plans in Selected ASEAN Member States

Country	NAP Status	Key Pillars / Focus	Lead Agency	CSO Involvement	Principal Challenges
Indonesia	2nd Gen. RAN P3AKS (2020–2025)	Social conflict prevention; P/CVE; protection; empowerment; participation	Kemenko PMK; KemenPPPA	High – AMAN Indonesia, Komnas Perempuan in drafting & monitoring	Funding gaps; inter-agency coordination; patriarchal norms; data deficits
Philippines	4th Gen. NAP (2023–2033)	Conflict prevention; participation; protection; Mindanao peacebuilding	OPAPRU (Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity)	Very High – extensive CSO consultations embedded in all NAP generations	Translating policy to local outcomes; political violence targeting women
Vietnam	1st Gen. NAP (2024–2030)	UN peacekeeping participation; war legacy; gender equality in security sector	Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of National Defence	Moderate and growing – women's CSOs active; specific WPS engagement evolving	New framework; implementation track record to be established
Thailand	In Development	Participation; protection; prevention; non-traditional security (expected)	Ministry of Social Development & Human Security; MFA (expected)	Moderate – CSOs active on GBV and peacebuilding; NAP process engagement ongoing	Translating regional commitments to national action; integrating grassroots voices
Malaysia	No formal NAP (interest signalled for ASEAN Chairmanship 2025)	Participation in security; P/CVE; protection (if developed)	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development; Ministry of Defence	Moderate – CSOs work on gender equality and VAW; WPS-specific advocacy limited	Consistent funding; data for gender analysis; political prioritization
Singapore	No designated NAP; WPS Index Rank: 15th	Structural gender equality via national policy; women in security	Ministry of Social and Family Development; Ministry of Defence	Moderate – gender advocacy CSOs active; WPS framing less prominent	Absence of formal WPS framework; gender stereotypes in military culture
Cambodia	NAP in development	Participation; protection; peacekeeping contribution (expected)	Ministry of Women's Affairs; Ministry of National Defence (expected)	Limited – CSOs active on GBV; WPS-specific engagement nascent	Weak institutional capacity; low female representation in security sector
Myanmar	No NAP; severe regression	N/A (pre-coup: some gender)	N/A – junta governance	Severely restricted – women's	Military coup; systematic

	post-2021 coup	equality efforts; no formal WPS NAP)		groups face extreme risk and repression	SGBV; foreclosure of women's political participation; humanitarian crisis
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Source: Authors' compilation from UN Women Asia-Pacific (2021, 2024); ASEAN Secretariat (2022); GIWPS & PRIO (2023); IPU (2024); Human Rights Watch (2025).

The UNODC-UN Women-INTERPOL (2020) report on Women in Law Enforcement in the ASEAN Region found that women comprised between 6% and 20% of police forces across most ASEAN member states, with Cambodia recording figures below 5% and Indonesia among the lowest in the region. The report observed that "increasing the number of women in law enforcement is not only a matter of equity but also of effectiveness" – more gender-diverse police forces produce better victim-centered responses to gender-based violence and earn greater community trust (UNODC-UN Women-INTERPOL, 2020, p. 5). Indonesia's low female police representation, despite its elaborate national WPS architecture, starkly illustrates the gap between normative commitment and institutional transformation.

Table 2. Selected Gender and Security Indicators for ASEAN Member States (2023/24)

ASEAN State	WPS Index 2023/24 (Score / Rank / 177)	Women in Parliament (% , 2024)	Women in Police (% , approx.)	Gender Inequality Index	NAP Status
Brunei	Not included	11.8%	~14.8% (2019)	Data limited	No NAP
Cambodia	0.599 / Rank 110	13.6%	<5% (2013)	0.486 (Rank 122)	In Development
Indonesia	0.683 / Rank 82	21.9%	~5.7% (2022)	0.459 (2022)	2nd Gen. NAP Active
Lao PDR	0.681 / Rank 79	22.0%	6–20% range (est.)	GDI: 0.926 (2022)	No NAP reported
Malaysia	0.730 / Rank 64	13.5%	6–20% range (est.)	Rank 103 (GGGI)	No formal NAP
Myanmar	0.451 / Rank 165	15.3% (pre-coup)	~8% (2019)	0.498 (2021)	No NAP; severe crisis
Philippines	0.626 / Rank 121	27.3%	6–20% range (est.)	Data limited	4th Gen. NAP Active
Singapore	0.887 / Rank 15	~29.3–30.0%	6–20% range (est.)	0.038 (Rank 8–12)	No designated NAP
Thailand	0.752 / Rank 52	16.2%	6–20% range (est.)	0.382 (Rank 69)	In Development
Vietnam	0.705 / Rank 78	30.2%	6–20% range (est.)	Rank 91/166 (2022)	1st Gen. NAP Active

Sources: GIWPS & PRIO (2023) WPS Index 2023/24; IPU (2024); UNODC-UN Women-INTERPOL (2020); UNDP (2024); ANTARA News (2022). Notes: Police figures are approximations; GII data from UNDP; "-" indicates data not readily available.

DISCUSSION

The findings presented above invite a theoretically grounded interpretation. The central pattern – Indonesia's elevated international norm entrepreneurship coexisting with persistently constrained domestic WPS implementation – cannot be attributed to cynicism or mere diplomatic theatre. The iterative development of the RAN P3AKS, the genuine engagement of CSOs in policy formulation, and the evidence of programmatic activity at sub-national levels all testify to a real, if incomplete,

normative commitment. The more analytically precise explanation lies in what this study characterizes as bifurcated norm entrepreneurship: the simultaneous operation of two normative registers — the diplomatic-multilateral and the administrative-domestic — that function according to different logics, face different audiences, and are subject to different accountability mechanisms (see Figure 1).

At the international level, Indonesia's WPS entrepreneurship is rewarded through diplomatic recognition, enhanced multilateral standing, and the reputational capital of being identified as a progressive middle power on gender and security issues. These incentives are real and function as genuine drivers of policy initiative, as Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 903) noted in their observation that "states care about their international image and reputation for compliance." Indonesia's championship of UNSCR 2538 served multiple interests simultaneously: it advanced the WPS agenda, it raised Indonesia's profile as a norm-shaping actor rather than a norm-receiving one, and it aligned with Indonesia's structural interest as a major peacekeeping contributor in securing formal recognition for its female military personnel.

At the domestic level, however, the accountability structures are weaker, the resource constraints sharper, and the opposition — rooted in patriarchal institutional cultures within the military, police, religious establishments, and local government — more entrenched. The Indonesian case confirms Swaine's (2009, p. 404) cautionary observation that NAPs on WPS "risk becoming paper promises if not accompanied by dedicated financial resources, clear implementing mandates, and transparent monitoring mechanisms." The persistent funding shortfalls documented across both generations of the RAN P3AKS — where WPS activities have been largely dependent on international donor support from UN Women and USAID rather than consolidated national budget lines — reflect a structural under-investment that no amount of normative ambition can compensate.

The integration of WPS with P/CVE deserves particular scrutiny through a feminist IR lens. Gayatri & True (2024) argued that this linkage produces a political arrangement in which WPS provides normative legitimacy while counter-terrorism provides the operational logic, creating the risk that women are valued instrumentally as assets in state security efforts rather than as full political agents deserving empowerment on their own terms. The concern is not merely theoretical: Indonesia's P/CVE programming has at times emphasized women's roles as early warning sentinels and as rehabilitators of returned foreign terrorist fighters — roles that, while valuable, remain within a logic of security management rather than structural gender equality.

ASEAN's structural architecture introduces a distinctive normative constraint that differentiates the Southeast Asian WPS experience from European or Latin American contexts. The "ASEAN Way" — characterized by consensus decision-making, non-interference in member states' internal affairs, and a preference for dialogue over enforcement — has shaped the ASEAN RPA WPS in ways that simultaneously enable and limit its potential. On the enabling side, the RPA WPS's acknowledged flexibility — its stated intention to provide "clear guidance while allowing sufficient space to ensure WPS implementation speaks to national and sub-national peace and security priorities" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022, p. 5) — reflects a principled acknowledgment that top-down norm imposition is not viable in this regional context. This is precisely the logic of Acharya's (2004) norm localization: the RPA WPS survives as a regional document precisely because it does not threaten the foundational norms of ASEAN sovereignty.

On the limiting side, the same structural flexibility means that the RPA WPS lacks binding enforcement mechanisms, financial conditionality, or any form of peer accountability beyond periodic self-reporting. The contrast with the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention or the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará) — both of which carry formal monitoring bodies — is instructive. In the ASEAN context, the dramatic deterioration of WPS conditions in Myanmar following the 2021 coup demonstrated the limits of consensus-based regional governance with particular starkness: ASEAN's Five-Point

Consensus on Myanmar contained no specific WPS provisions, and the RPA WPS — adopted more than a year after the coup — had no mechanism to address the systematic violence against women perpetrated by the military junta.

The role of civil society organizations as norm entrepreneurs deserves fuller theoretical recognition than it has so far received in the ASEAN WPS literature. In Indonesia's case, organizations such as AMAN Indonesia — which explicitly bridges progressive Islamic scholarship with WPS peacebuilding practice — have functioned as what Keck and Sikkink (1998) would recognize as classic advocacy network actors, leveraging transnational connections to insert global norms into domestic policy processes while simultaneously localizing those norms through community-based programming. Komnas Perempuan, as an independent national human rights institution, has served a different but equally critical function: providing authoritative monitoring data that holds the state accountable to its own normative commitments. The political ecology in which these CSOs operate, however, is complicated by the revised TNI Law of 2025 — which expanded the military's role in civilian governance affairs — and by a broader political climate in which civic space faces mounting pressure, as documented by both Human Rights Watch (2025) and Amnesty International (2024).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This article has made three interconnected arguments about Indonesia's relationship with the WPS agenda and its implications for ASEAN regional diplomacy. First, Indonesia exhibits a distinctive form of bifurcated norm entrepreneurship: energetic and consequential at the multilateral level, but persistently constrained at the domestic level by structural deficits in funding, coordination, and institutional culture. Second, this bifurcation is not anomalous but reflects a broader tension — theorized here through the frameworks of Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) and Acharya (2004) — between the incentive structures that drive international norm promotion and the accountability structures that determine domestic norm implementation. Third, within Indonesia's domestic WPS landscape, civil society organizations have been the most consistent norm entrepreneurs, but their effectiveness is structurally bounded by limited resourcing and a political environment that is becoming less hospitable to autonomous civic engagement.

For policymakers in Indonesia, the most urgent recommendation follows directly from the diagnostic: closing the gap between the country's international WPS reputation and its domestic WPS reality requires not more framework elaboration but a substantive reorientation of implementation resources. Specifically, the government should establish dedicated, multi-year budget allocations for the RAN P3AKS that are not contingent on international donor support; develop a transparent and public monitoring and evaluation system with gender-disaggregated outcomes data; and formalize the role of CSOs — including Komnas Perempuan and AMAN Indonesia — as statutory partners in RAN P3AKS governance rather than as consultative extras. In the security sector, systematic and mandatory WPS training should be institutionalized within POLRI and TNI professional development curricula, with measurable recruitment targets for women in operational and leadership roles.

For ASEAN as a collective, the adoption of the RPA WPS represents a genuine normative achievement that should not be understated. But the RPA WPS's potential will remain largely untapped without a more robust architecture of accountability. ASEAN member states should consider establishing an independent WPS monitoring and reporting mechanism — potentially housed within the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) — that produces public, disaggregated assessments of national WPS progress. Regional peer learning mechanisms, building on the successful NAP Academy model developed by ASEAN-IPR and UN Women, should be scaled and institutionalized with dedicated funding, enabling states at earlier stages of WPS engagement to benefit from the experience of more advanced implementers.

Finally, the international community and bilateral development partners should recalibrate their WPS

support for Southeast Asia to prioritize long-term institutional capacity building over short-term programmatic outputs. Sustainable WPS progress in Indonesia and across ASEAN requires sustained investment in precisely those unglamorous infrastructure elements — budget systems, data collection capacities, inter-agency coordination mechanisms — that rarely make diplomatic headlines but determine whether the WPS agenda is, in Shepherd's (2008) terms, genuinely transformative or merely performative.

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