

One-Year Prabowo's Foreign Policy: A Gender Analysis

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Ten years ago, Indonesia began to pay greater attention to gender issues in its foreign policy. This attention is evident both externally, through the promotion of gender equality in international forums, and internally, through the encouragement of gender mainstreaming within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Kemlu*). This approach aligns with the global trend of values-based diplomacy, [which embeds gender equality in foreign policy](#).

However, one year after Prabowo Subianto took over the administration, a crucial question arises: has the commitment to a gender perspective in foreign policy been maintained, or has it regressed?

To answer this question, this article evaluates the direction and practices of Indonesian foreign policy during Prabowo's first year in office using a gender perspective, specifically examining the extent to which Indonesian foreign policy has considered gender factors in its formulation and implementation.

Gender in Prabowo's Foreign Policy

The evaluation begins with a review of the Asta Cita document, the 2025 Annual Press Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (PPTM), and the implementation of diplomacy during the first year of Prabowo's administration.

The Asta Cita document commits to "ensuring that every policy is inclusive and gender-sensitive, prioritizing women's empowerment." However, the document does not provide a strong indication that foreign policy will be conducted with a gender perspective.

Furthermore, the word "gender" appears only seven times out of a total of 88 pages, while "women" is mentioned only eleven times. By comparison, the word "economy" is repeated over one hundred times. It suggests that gender is not a priority for the Prabowo administration.

The 2025 PPTM, presented by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sugiono, makes no mention of gender mainstreaming, either in its evaluation of the global situation or in its direction for Indonesian diplomacy. In terms of keywords, the most frequently mentioned words in the 2025 PPTM are "diplomacy" (34 times) and "economy" (23 times). The absence of gender issues demonstrates a lack of attention to gender issues and a lack of continuity with previous policies that positioned gender as part of Indonesian foreign policy.

In practice, Prabowo's foreign policy tends to adopt a masculine diplomatic style, strongly oriented toward security and economic investment. Furthermore, diplomacy under Prabowo's direct control is dominated by activism, [summit diplomacy](#), defense modernization, and the [diversification of strategic partnerships](#).

Throughout his first year, Prabowo made [36 foreign visits to 25 countries](#), focusing on [defense equipment purchases](#), defense cooperation, and [foreign investment negotiations](#). This shift altered the orientation of foreign policy from a normative to a strategic dimension.

Regarding ambassadorial appointments, Prabowo has shown no initiative to increase the number of female ambassadors. Of the 41 ambassadors Prabowo appointed throughout 2025 (March and October), only 7 were female ambassadors, and 1 was a female deputy ambassador. It means that female ambassadors constitute only 17% of the total number of ambassadors appointed. This number has remained unchanged since previous years, when [the percentage of female ambassadors appointed was consistently below 20%](#).

Meanwhile, internally, *Kemlu* has not shown significant progress in gender mainstreaming. There are no new policies, such as ministerial regulations, circulars, or institutional initiatives that build on the achievements of the previous period, such as the issuance of gender-responsive budgeting guidelines (2015) and the Ministerial Regulation on the implementation of gender mainstreaming (2020). This lack of institutional innovation suggests stagnation in the internalization of gender equality values within diplomatic institutions, such as *Kemlu*.

Why Have Gender Issues Disappeared from Foreign Policy?

The lack of attention to gender issues in foreign policy during the Prabowo era is primarily due to Prabowo's strong involvement in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. It is compounded by Prabowo's track record of [consistently failing to prioritize gender issues](#). The combination of these two factors plays a central role in the current decline in gender attention in Indonesian foreign policy.

In contrast to the Joko Widodo era, when *Kemlu* was relatively autonomous in formulating its diplomatic agenda due to minimal presidential involvement, Prabowo has demonstrated a personalistic foreign policy model. Prabowo actively leads the direction of diplomacy. This pattern limits *Kemlu*'s initiative, both institutionally and individually, to develop normative agendas, such as gender mainstreaming.

Institutionally, the strong presidential control hinders *Kemlu* in implementing Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development in the realm of foreign policy. Individually, the foreign minister's close ties to the president and lack of experience in gender equality issues further weaken internal advocacy for gender-based diplomacy.

In addition to political factors, cultural factors also contribute to the omission of gender issues from Indonesian foreign policy. The masculine orientation of foreign policy has resulted in gender and other emancipatory issues being sidelined and neglected in foreign policy implementation.

The loss of gender mainstreaming in foreign policy has caused Indonesia to lose its position as a normative entrepreneur on gender equality issues. It is a role that Indonesia began cultivating 10 years ago by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment both regionally and internationally, despite ongoing domestic gender issues. This stagnation has the potential to weaken *Kemlu*'s capacity to build inclusive and responsive diplomatic institutions that promote social justice, particularly gender equity.

Conclusion

One year of the Prabowo administration has demonstrated a tendency to depoliticize gender issues in Indonesian foreign policy. The centralization of diplomatic power in the president, the implementation of a masculine foreign policy, and weak institutional initiatives within *Kemlu* have contributed to the disappearance of the gender equality agenda from Indonesian diplomatic practice. If this situation persists, Indonesia is at risk of regressing and falling behind global trends toward an increasingly feminist and pro-gender orientation in the implementation of foreign policy.

Therefore, the Prabowo administration needs to pay greater attention to gender issues, including in the implementation of Indonesian foreign policy. At least four steps are required to restore a gender perspective to Indonesian foreign policy. First, provide *Kemlu* with greater autonomy to determine the direction and dynamics of foreign policy. Second, strengthen gender mainstreaming and encourage *Kemlu* to consistently incorporate gender initiatives into all its actions, both internally and externally.

Third, increase the representation of female diplomats in top positions at *Kemlu* and ensure greater involvement of female diplomats in strategic diplomatic decision-making processes, both internally and externally. Finally, integrate gender issues into the foreign policy priority agenda.