

GBA+

## Application

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### Author

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# An Alliance in Trouble? Turkey and NATO in 2025

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Defence & Security Foresight  
Group

## About the Author

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Dr. Leigh Spanner is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Social Innovation and Community Engagement in Military Affairs. At the Centre she is contributing to research on gender and the transition from military to civilian life in Canada. Dr. Spanner holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Alberta, where her doctoral research focused on Canadian military families. Her research engages questions of gender, militaries and international security.

**GBA+ Application for:** “An Alliance in Trouble? Turkey and NATO in 2025” by Balkan Devlen

**DSFG Thematic Team:** Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

## Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)

GBA+ is an analytical tool to advance gender equality and diversity outcomes of various policies, programs, and services. This strategy of gender mainstreaming is specific to the Government of Canada, and includes not only gender but also intersectional considerations, such as race and sexuality. In 2016, DND-CAF adopted GBA+ in response to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, which acknowledges the need for gender perspectives in conflict, post-conflict and peacebuilding processes, and women's participation in decision making. GBA+ training through the Status of Women Canada online course is mandated for most DND-CAF employees and is an important consideration in assessing the most pressing future defence and security issues.

The GBA+ team of the DSF Group has developed a GBA+ toolkit that supports authors of working papers to integrate gender and intersectional considerations in their work from the initial stages of their research to the development of evidence-based findings and recommendations. The GBA+ Toolkit provides a series of key questions for regional teams to consider, such as: "are your concepts conceived in broad and inclusive ways to account for the experiences and perspectives of those not well represented in research and power structures?" or "how does your foresight analysis reinforce or challenge existing power relations?" A gender-liaison from each regional team works in consultation with members of the GBA+ team to develop GBA+ for the working papers. This GBA+ application complements the efforts of working paper authors to apply a GBA+ lens to their work.

## GBA+ Considerations of Turkey and NATO

This paper forecasts Turkey's relationship with its NATO allies, five years on. Using the Delphi method, a forecasting method of cycles of estimation by a group of subject matter experts, the author presents three possible futures for Turkey and NATO: Muddling Through, Return to the Fold, and Breakup. The author suggests that improved relations between Turkey and NATO allies are unlikely, and that five years on relations will be characterized by a future of Muddling Through. This is based on group-expert forecasting, which anticipates: continued divergence in key security priorities between Turkey and NATO allies; augmented security cooperation between Turkey and Russia (particularly on matters relating to Syria); and increased authoritarianism over the next five years. With that in mind, the author offers suggestions to Canada for reducing the negative impacts of such a scenario, by acting as a mediator in disagreements about security priorities in the alliance.

Methodologically, this research utilizes the Delphi method, which is a collaborative approach to forecasting, and as such has the potential to include a variety of voices and perspectives. Considering the perspectives and experiences of a representative sample of society, and being mindful of the inclusion of marginalized groups, is a central component of GBA+. Focus group participants for this study on Turkey and NATO represented Canadian or European civil servants, military, or academics. **Expanding representation** in the focus group to include non-state actors and other individuals that are on the ground and closer to local realities in Turkey, such as think tanks, journalists, and civil society operating in Turkey, would enrich the forecasting by providing alternative views and expanding who counts as 'expert'. Likewise, a GBA+ lens would consider the geographic locations from which the experts come, encouraging the inclusion of perspectives from outside of the West, specifically from people in the region—from Turkey, Syria, Libya, or Cyprus.

Applying a GBA+ lens to questions related to Turkey and NATO would allow for a focus beyond the state and national security, to **also consider questions of human security and issues of human rights, gender rights, or democracy promotion**. This is especially salient given the forecast that Turkey will become increasingly authoritarian over the next five years. Political participation and human rights have important impacts on human populations, like the Kurdish minority and women, and should be considered too when analyzing any potential rifts in future Turkey-NATO relations. Applying a GBA+ lens could help illuminate how human security concerns, including democracy promotion and human rights, impact national security, thus enriching the foresight analysis. For example, looking at development markers and non-traditional security markers (such as birth rates, insurgency, education, religion, extremism) are important for Canada's security goals given their impacts on political asylum seeking, regional development, Turkish development, and the diaspora community in Canada. A GBA+ lens could help highlight this relationship between state security and human security impacts.

## Recommendations

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- > In forecast analyses of Turkey-NATO relations, Canada would benefit from including more voices from marginalized communities, including women, visible minorities, and representatives from the Global South, particularly from the implicated country (i.e. Turkey) and its regional counterparts.
- > Canada would also be prudent to consider in more depth the regional and global impacts of the Turkey-NATO alliance beyond its effects on Western state interests (i.e. examine its impact on human security beyond the West).
- > In the assessment of security alliances and joint priorities, Canada should include from the outset the human dimensions of security, such as gender and human rights, poverty levels, and other development markers. This is particularly important in light of Canada's commitment to feminist foreign policy.