

CSW60

Commission on the
Status of Women
14-24 March 2016

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



CSW60
14-24 March 2016
New York

Report on the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women



PeaceWomen
WILPF

© 2016 PeaceWomen, a programme of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Permission is granted for non-commercial reproduction, copying, distribution, and transmission of this publication or parts thereof so long as full credit is given to the coordinating project and organisation, editor, and relevant authors; the text is not altered, transformed, or built upon; and for any reuse or distribution, these terms are made clear to others. The PeaceWomen team is very grateful to all who represented WILPF during CSW60 and helped us with the monitoring of a vast variety of Women, Peace and Security related events. Thanks in particular to: Joanna Lockspeiser, Kathryn Krueger, Lyna Zaim, Marina Kumskova, Marta Bautista and Nela Abey.

Report author: Lyna Zaim

Editors: Abigail Ruane and Grace Jennings-Edquist

Cover banner credit: UN Women

Cover photo: Members of the WILPF team attending our symposium, “Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for Global Study Recommendations” (Photograph by PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Contributors: Abigail Ruane, Grace Jennings-Edquist, Joanna Lockspeiser, Kathryn Krueger, Lyna Zaim, Marina Kumskova, Marta Bautista and Nela Abeygunawardana

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

1. Introduction: p. 6
2. Background on CSW60 and the Women Peace and Security Agenda: p. 7
3. WILPF at CSW60: p. 8
 - a) Addressing the root causes of violence and war: p. 8
 - b) Highlighting the Importance of Moving from Political Economy of War to Political Economy of Gender Justice and Peace: p. 10
4. Overview and Summaries from Women, Peace and Security Events at CSW60: p. 12
 - a) Summaries from WILPF's Main Events at CSW60: p. 12
 - b) Summaries from Selected Side Events at CSW60: p. 31
5. Outcomes of CSW60: Agreed Conclusions: p. 63
6. Next steps: p. 64
7. Useful Links: p. 65
8. Appendix: WILPF's 2016 statement to the CSW: p. 66



A CSW60 banner outside UN headquarters in New York (Photograph by Joanna Lockspeiser, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

List of Abbreviations

ABAAD	Resource Center for Gender Equality
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BCT	Breaking Criminal Traditions
BDS	Boycott, Divest, and Sanction
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CAP International	Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DMZ	Korean Demilitarised Zone
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EDF	The Entrepreneurship Development Foundation for Women and Youth
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FTF	Feminist Task Force
GCAP	Global Call to Action against Poverty
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIL/Daesh	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JRR-UN	Justice Rapid Response
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle-East and North Africa
MIFTAH	The Palestinian Initiative for Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual Gender-based Violence
SHE	Social Health and Empowerment Feminist Collective
SIGI/J	Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan
UCP	Unarmed Civilian Protection

UN	United Nations
UN-Women	United Nations Women
UNHC	United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNRISD	Research Coordinator, Gender and Development
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
WICC	Women's Information Consultative Centre
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WIN	Women's Intercultural Network
WPP	Women PeaceMakers Program and Partners
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WFUMO	World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations

1. Introduction

The 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) took place at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York from 14 to 24 March, 2016. The priority theme this year was "*Women's Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development.*"

This summary provides an overview of certain CSW60 events strongly related to PeaceWomen/WILPF's the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and/or our key geographical focus areas. It therefore only represents a fraction of the WPS events held during CSW60.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda refers to Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015.) These resolutions guide work to strengthen women's participation, protection and rights in conflict prevention through post-conflict reconstruction processes.

2. Background on CSW60 and the Women Peace and Security Agenda

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC.) It is dedicated to gender equality and advancement of women worldwide, founded around the dual purpose of being both as “sparkplug for women’s interests” and also a means of mainstreaming gender equality more broadly.

CSW is held every year at the United Nations in New York, to evaluate progress on gender equality, identifying challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

Every year has a different priority theme, and a different review theme. This year’s theme was “Women’s Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development.” This year’s review theme was “The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.” The commission this year also addressed next steps for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); which were adopted in 2015 after expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs.)

Each year, besides the official events there are side events, parallel events and workshops. CSW provides a unique opportunity especially for global civil society groups and grassroots organisations to raise their voices and participate in discussion on these issues.

3. WILPF at CSW60

WILPF members mobilised, strategised, and demanded action at [CSW60](#), where over 40 activists and advocates joined together with around 4,100 other civil society participants at hundreds of events in a two-week session around UN headquarters.



Stella Boyages (WILPF Australia,) Margrethe Tingsta, (WILPF Norway,) Ferial Abu Hamda, (WILPF Lebanon) at CSW60
(Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

WILPFers came from: Australia, Bosnia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Japan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Syria, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Together we called not just for women's empowerment, but for transformational change that moves from a political economy of war to a political economy of gender justice, demilitarisation, and peace.



Barbro Svedberg and Madeleine Rees (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Together, we demanded that the international community [shift the gaze](#). We have waited long enough for governments to fully implement commitments on gender equality, disarmament, and peace. Now it is now time for the feminist movement to mobilise and take our own action!

a) Addressing Root Causes of Violence and War

We built on [WILPF's 100th anniversary peace summit](#) in April 2015 where we brought together 1,000 activists from 80 countries to mobilise around Women's Power to Stop War. We shared our written [statement](#), calling for “feminist foreign and domestic policy that ensures local action on demilitarisation and women’s human rights for transformative change” as well as for “a change in priorities that invest in women’s human rights, divest from militarism, and safeguard political economies of gender justice and peace rather than economies of inequality and war.”



Liberian activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Leymah Gbowee and participants at “Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for Global Study Recommendation ”(Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

We also amplified the voices of grassroots women human rights defenders and peace activists, and mobilised within and beyond the feminist peace movement. As part of this, we worked with MADRE and other partners to organise a successful symposium on developing a roadmap to implement the 2015 Global Study on UNSCR 1325 and supported five other events at CSW.

According to WILPF’s formidable Secretary General Madeleine Rees, “We need to challenge militarism as a way of thought.”

According to WILPF PeaceWomen Director Abigail Ruane, who coordinated WILPF’s engagement with CSW 60, “It is time change our story: together we must act in solidarity to put people over profit and those most marginalised at the mainstream.”



Madeleine Rees at “Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for Global Study Recommendations”
(Photograph by Marta Bautista, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

b) Highlighting the Importance of Moving from Political Economy of War to Political Economy of Gender Justice and Peace

As part of our preparations for the 60th Commission on the Status of Women and as part of our ongoing webinar series by the [WILPF Academic Network](#), WILPF hosted a webinar on 2 March, 2016, on the topic, “Towards the Goal of Social Justice: Women’s Empowerment and Sustainable Development (CSW 60.)” The discussion of this [webinar](#) focused on shifting the current economic and security paradigm to promote people over profit for human rights, human security, and sustainable peace.

WILPF events at CSW60 featured packed rooms, emphasising the importance of the issues we addressed.

At WILPF’s and MADRE’s Symposium, “[Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations](#)” at CUNY Law Centre,” Lydia Alpizar of AWID stated, “Counter-terrorism measures have been utilised to attack civil society and limit freedom of expression in the context of the shrinkage of the world’s democratic space.” According to Sharon Bhagwan Rolls of FemLink Pacific, “Allocation of funding is also necessary to ensure that peace processes consistently include women.”

At WILPF and CARE's event, "[The Syrian Regional Crisis: A women's rights perspective on humanitarian action and protection](#)," Asma Khader from the Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan (SIGI/J) stated, "When it comes to military, everyone wants to get involved but when it's gender, very few are responding positively and most are ignoring the millions in need." According to WILPF Crisis Response Programme Manager and Syrian lawyer Laila Alodaat, "Arms disproportionately impact women, and no arms actually help women."

WILPF also supported events with WILPF US on the [Empowerment of Women and Girls and Sustainable Development](#) and [Unpacking the Gender Binary](#), with Women Cross the DMZ on [Women's Leadership in the Korean Peace Process](#), and with MenEngage on [engaging men and boys for gender justice](#).

WILPF events emphasised the importance of mobilising across movements to transform systems of militarism from violent masculinities to the military industrial complex. It is critical to strengthen women's substantive participation and rights, especially for those most at risk, to uphold human rights and promote sustainable development and peace.



Madeleine Rees and Abigail Ruane with others demanding justice at rally at Dag Hammarskjold plaza (Photograph by WOREC Nepal)

In the midst of all this strategizing and mobilising, WILPF joined hundreds of our our sister women human rights defenders in at a rally demanding justice for recently assassinated environmental and indigenous rights activist and women human rights defender, Berta Cáceres, who was murdered in Honduras on 3 March, 2016.

Berta's daughter, Bertha Zúñiga Cáceres, joined participants at WILPF and MADRE's symposium to bring attention to her mother's legacy. She shared a powerful call for solidarity and collaborative action against militarised and extractivist industries that violate indigenous land rights and women's human rights. She called for the struggle to continue: "Berta Vive!"

4. Overview and Summaries from Women, Peace and Security Events at CSW60

As part of this year's CSW theme – *"Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development"* – WILPF demanded not just women's empowerment, but transformational change that moves from a political economy of war to a political economy of gender justice, demilitarisation, and peace.

In addition to the events we hosted, WILPF/PeaceWomen monitored more than 24 events related to the WPS Agenda. Events were hosted both by non-governmental organisations (NGOs); intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and member states ranging from Afghanistan to Zambia.,

Some of the overarching themes during this year's CSW were w linking the SGDs with women's human rights and evaluating the SDGs with a gender lens; protecting the rights of women refugees and asylum seekers; integrating gender and humanitarian response; emphasising the importance of women's role in peace talks; gender-responsive climate solutions; enhancing women's political participation; tools for accountability in monitoring the implementation of SDGs; empowering women human rights defenders; and the link between sustainable development and violence against women. Many of the conflict-related events dealt with the situation of women and girls in the MENA region, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

a) Summaries from WILPF's Main Events at CSW60

Name of event: Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations

Organised by: WILPF, MADRE, AWID, Nobel Women, Men Engage Alliance, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and the Sorensen Centre

Themes: General WPS, implementation, peace processes, conflict prevention, human rights, disarmament

On 15 March, 2016, MADRE and WILPF, in collaboration with the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID); Sorensen Center for Peace and Justice;

MenEngage Alliance, NGO Working Group on Women; Peace and Security; and Nobel Women's Initiative; hosted a symposium with the theme, "Implementing the Women; Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations."



The audience at the symposium "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations" (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

The event brought together approximately 150 participants from over 40 countries worldwide. Speakers included Radhika Coomaraswamy (lead author, UNSCR 1325 Global Study); Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Under-Secretary-General, United Nations and Executive Director, UN Women) and Purna Sen (Director of Policy, UN Women); Lisa Davis (Professor of Law, CUNY Law School and MADRE); Leymah Gbowee (Nobel Laureate); Madeleine Rees (Secretary-General, WILPF); Yifat Susskind (Executive Director, MADRE); Liesl Gerntholtz (Executive Director, Human Rights Watch); Camille Massey (Founding Executive Director, Sorensen Center for International Peace and Justice at CUNY Law School); as well as conversation circle facilitators and rapporteurs from Mexico to South Africa, and from Fiji to The Netherlands.

The event created space for civil society organisations to mobilise around recommendations from the Global Study. It also aimed to build momentum to advance and strengthen next steps for civil society, the UN, governments, and other key stakeholders for effective implementation of the WPS Agenda.



Leymah Gbowee at the symposium "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations" (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

In the opening discussion, Coomaraswamy reflected on her take-aways from drafting the 2015 UNSCR 1325 Global Study. She suggested that the main priority should be to prevent excessive militarisation that has been recently promoted not only by the Member States but also by the UN and other international organisations. Coomaraswamy also reminded participants about the dangers of the use of chemical weapons, the increased development of technologies, and the progress in intelligence gathering that need to be brought to the attention of the international community in order to ensure progress toward the full implementation of the UNSCR 1325. She also emphasized the importance of inclusive processes and the need to mainstream a "conversation" among involved stakeholders with a view to identify problems and take action on them. These conversations, the author pointed out, are a critical prerequisite for action.



Dr. Purna Sen during "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations" (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

After the panel discussion, participants broke out into conversation circles on five priority issue areas to discuss strategies for creating change, outline civil society commitments, and share calls to action. Issue areas included: 1) addressing militarisation and violent masculinities, 2) preventing violent extremism, 3) supporting women's human rights defenders and peacebuilders, 4) adequate financing for the WPS agenda, and 5) participation in peace and reconstruction Processes.



Example of conversation circle during "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations" (Photograph by Kathryn Krueger, Peacewomen/WILPF)

While building on the recommendations provided in the Global Study, dialogue at the symposium reinforced the recognition of WPS as a political agenda that is bound up in issues of gendered power. Because of this, participants called for transformative political, rather than technical, solutions for effective implementation and accountability. As part of this, conversation circles all supported concrete action to enhance accountability mechanisms, establish sustainable funding solutions, continue collaborative work among different stakeholders, and prevent the shrinkage of the democratic and civil society space.



Dean Peacock during “Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations” (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Key highlights from calls to action included:

- Bring attention to how the military economy promotes violence from the home to the world and how investing in local women’s peace work is a critical alternative for peace;
- Take action to reduce military spending and redirect it to gender equitable social development, including around key areas such as gendered service provision for refugees and displaced people; social services addressing unpaid and devalued care work; access to justice; and reparations for women, ethnic, and LGBTQI communities;
- Fund the feminist movement through moving from project-based funding to strengthen ongoing, core support for feminist organisations with women’s rights as their primary priority, and overturn financial obstacles to supporting women’s human rights defenders and peace activists that have been created through the War on Terror;
- Support diverse readings of religious traditions to broaden political dialogue and affirm human rights standards as the baseline for all people rather than allowing political religion legitimacy for reducing these standards;
- Create independent peace talk audits and effective support and communication mechanisms to ensure women led civil society’s substantive participation in peace processes.

Highlighting the critical importance of effective action, Berta Zúñiga Cáceres made a powerful call for action. She shared the story of her mother, Berta Cáceres, an indigenous rights and environmental activist and women human rights defender, who

was murdered on 3 March, 2016. Berta called for action in solidarity for justice and action to defend women human rights defenders who are often particularly at risk.

In conclusion, Rees affirmed that the problem related to the implementation of the WPS Agenda is not as much due to a lack of funding, but rather political systems that prioritise systems of war over gender justice and peace. She called for mobilising across movements for transformative change: “We must challenge militarism as a way of thought.”



Madeleine Rees during the wrap-up session of the symposium “Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Roadmap for the 1325 Global Study Recommendations” (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Name of event: What has the Empowerment of Women and Girls Got to Do with Sustainable Development?

Organised by: WILPF US

Themes: Participation, human rights, implementation

On 14 March 2016, WILPF US held an event entitled, “What Has the Empowerment of Women and Girls Got to Do with Sustainable Development?” Participants included Maureen Eke (Program Chair, WILPF US); Lamia Sadek (Managing Director, WILPS US) and Mary Hanson Harrison (President, WILPF US.) Discussion built on WILPF’s longstanding demands for preventing conflict by addressing all forms of militarised gender inequality and violence – in this context, by ensuring gender-equitable sustainable development that moves from an economy of war to an economy of gender justice and peace.

During this event, panelists shared their experiences and analysis around Goal 5 of the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”



Lamia Sadek (WILPF-US) speaks at "What has the Empowerment of Women and Girls Got to Do with Sustainable Development? Perspectives from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Panelists highlighted the importance of ensuring that women’s rights and gender equality be also integrated throughout all 17 Goals, rather than relying solely on Goal 5 to address gender equality. They also affirmed the need to ensure gender is implemented in an intersectional manner that recognises overlapping systems of exploitation, oppression and violence and their impact on social, environmental and economic challenges. Panelists affirmed the importance of ensuring the participation of young women, including grassroots women, into implementation and monitoring of the SDGs moving forward.

Panelists deplored the lack of significant progress on transforming women's roles in the world today and highlighted the urgent necessity of empowering young girls and other marginalized groups. Sadek reminded the audience that despite “despite economic empowerment programs, there are still inequalities between men and women.” As Sadek pointed out, programs aimed at empowering women, including mentorship programs, must integrate women’s substantive involvement.

The panelists also proposed that programs should facilitate spaces for organisational learning and movement-building by sharing best practices based on women’s lives and experiences, including around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. It was

suggested that this approach would help ensure programs are optimally sustainable and gender equitable.

Emphasising how gender equality crucial is to achieving poverty reduction and long-term peace, participants then explored how cross-community collaboration and exchange of experience can increase independence and empowerment. Building on her experience with local communities in Central America, Hanson Harrison made a tribute to Berta Caceres, the recently assassinated feminist indigenous rights activist, and called for activists to be - like her - “not passive but persistent.”



Maureen Enke (WILPF US) at "What has the Empowerment of Women and Girls Got to Do with Sustainable Development? Perspectives from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Involving different stakeholders is critical to achieving real change. Sadek emphasised the importance of involving younger generations in activism, while Eke discussed how she had used creative exercises to raise consciousness about gender and race among young girls. Building on her teaching experience, Eke said this work had helped build girls' confidence, engagement, and leadership skills.

Harrison affirmed the need to continually strengthen support and engagement with grassroots activists. WILPF's work with local communities is one example of such mobilisation, and needs continued strengthening as part of broader feminist peace movement building for change.

Name of event: Women's Leadership in the Korea Peace Process:
Recommendations

Organised by: Women Cross DMZ

Themes: Disarmament, peace building, peace processes

On 17 March 2016, Women Cross DMZ held an event entitled, "Women's Leadership in the Korean Peace Process." The panel was composed of feminist leaders who made the historic May 24 2015 crossing of the De-Militarised Zone (DMZ) from North to South

Korea to support peaceful reunification of Korea. Participants included: Kozue Akibayash (President, WILPF International); Gwyn Kirk (scholar, activists and member of Women for Genuine Security); Gloria Steinem (activist and author); Jeong-ae Ahn-Kim (Representative, Women Making Peace); Ann Wright (Advisory Board member, Vets for Peace.)

Panelists shared experiences meeting with local people in North and South Korea as part of their historic crossing, and shared insights on the history of this conflict and its consequences. Kirk announced a very clear goal: "This group wants to have a Korean peace treaty by 2020, and we want to have a peacebuilding/peacekeeping treaty."

Seventy years after the end of the Korean civil war and its division into North and South, participants pointed out, no peace treaty has ever been signed. The Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) is a strip of land that is meant to serve as a buffer zone between North and South Korea. However, it has in reality been the site of hundreds of military and civilian deaths. Steinem observed that this situation created a "war symbolic" that should be replaced by a "peace symbolic, to show an alternative to the conflict situation to the young generation."

Panelists built on their personal experience with censorship in North Korea and strong opposition during peace walks to describe the obstacles that activists continue to face. According to the panel, women peace activists from both North and South Korea have organised meetings with delegates from both North and South Korea to gauge interest in a reunification process. At these meetings, both sides showed a strong will to work on a peace process together, and were interested in working toward the demilitarisation of the DMZ and the creation of a non-patriarchal society. As Kirk explained, "There is a long history of women waiting to cross that divide and it's very difficult nowadays with such a repressive regime." Thus, activists have marched on both sides of the DMZ several times, and organised federative peace events, emphasizing a common will to move forward with more unity. Despite challenges, Steinem concluded on an optimistic note, noting that local people's will "makes me sure that [reunification] is going to happen in our lifetime."

Demilitarisation was a strong theme of this event, and was acknowledged to be a key part of the peacebuilding process, particularly in relation to conflicts with regional consequences such as this one. As Kirk observed, "the peace process has been male-centred due to militarisation, and it is important that women share their perspective to give a voice to victims."

Akibayash noted that the division of Korea "has been used as an excuse to allow militarisation", which has turned the situation into a vicious circle feeding violence and especially sexual violence against women. "There has been a new case of sexual

violence from US soldiers happening very far from [their military] base,” she added. “It has been spreading. We have to get rid of the military bases.”



Kozue Akibayashi at "Women's Leadership in the Korea Peace Process" (Photograph by Marta Bautista, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Gender equality being a precondition to peace, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 should be taken seriously - yet, no concrete steps have been taken to fully implement it, the panelists reiterated. They therefore called for the creation of an international action plan that could overcome the shortcomings of national action plans of the region and foster collaboration between countries. Thinking at this international level will help create the best possible dynamic from which to stand against increasing militarisation, the panelists added. “We have to have a tool that the international community is not going to mess with”, Ann Wright urged.

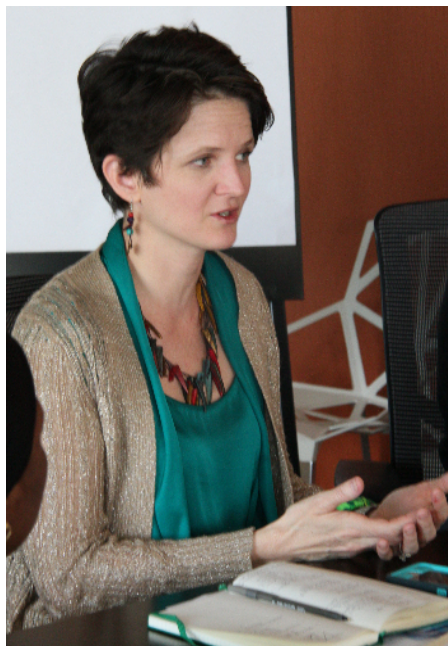
Name of event: WILPF Training Session: Accelerating Implementation of the WPS Agenda: Mobilizing Feminist Peace Activists for Accountability and Action (Closed Meeting)

Organised by: WILPF

Themes: Participation, prevention, implementation

On 17 March 2016, WILPF hosted a training session for WILPF delegates and partners entitled “Accelerating Implementation of the WPS Agenda: Mobilizing Feminist Peace Activists for Accountability and Action.” WILPF Sections from around the world as well as international staff, including from: Australia, DRC, Lebanon, Nigeria, Norway the United Kingdom and United States.

PeaceWomen’s Director, Dr. Abigail Ruane, moderated the training. Participants shared experiences and learning around local to global action for peace and gender justice that build on WILPF’s April 2015 centennial peace summit. We built global sisterhood, and worked together to build on good practice and develop strategies for action.



Dr Abigail Ruane at WILPF Training: "Accelerating Implementation of the WPS Agenda: Mobilising Feminist Peace Activists for Accountability and Action" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

We learned from each other and inspired each other! WILPF Nigeria shared their globally recognised work in developing human rights observatories, preventing and monitoring election violence, and conducting train the trainers programmes to use UNSCR 1325 to strengthen women's economic empowerment and combat gun violence in their communities. WILPF DRC shared how they facilitate 1325 engagement in the DRC among diverse stakeholders, including around implementation of UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan and connecting action on development with conflict prevention and peace. WILPF programme staff including WILPF's Disarmament Programme Director Ray Acheson, WILPF's Women, Peace and Security Programme Director Abigail Ruane, and WILPF Crisis Response Programme Manager Laila Alodaat also shared updates from the New York and Geneva offices on advocacy and outreach work for peace and freedom through demilitarisation, disarmament, and women's human rights.

Together, participants identified shared challenges and opportunities for overcoming these challenges. Key issues included limited, inconsistent, project-based donor funding short-term rather than long-term perspectives in donor funding that fail to recognise how implementing UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda is only possible through an integrated approach based on demilitarisation and human rights are under threat; stigmatisation of "feminism" as a term and difficulty especially African and Middle Eastern activists have in enabling communities to understand feminism as an inclusive instead of divisive concept; and, ongoing actions which commodify and co-op the women's movement as

instrumental counter-terrorism resources and service providers, rather than intrinsically valuable human rights defenders.



Lina Alameddine (WILPF Lebanon) at WILPF Training: "Accelerating Implementation of the WPS Agenda: Mobilising Feminist Peace Activists for Accountability and Action" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

We explored opportunities for building synergies for change. These included: developing gendered conflict early warning systems, innovative outreach to leverage the (2015) UNSCR 1325 Global Study for action, building collaborations between WILPF activists and the WILPF academic network, and strengthening communication among activists and staff for more effective collaboration and action.



Dr Abigail Ruane and other WILPF delegates at WILPF Training: "Accelerating Implementation of the WPS Agenda: Mobilising Feminist Peace Activists for Accountability and Action" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

The time we spent together was invigorating and inspiring! In the face of military and corporate power, apathetic policymakers, and institutional inertia, there is room for hope: Women human rights defenders and peace activists every day are taking action to build democratic peace based on gender justice in their communities. Together, we will continue to take action! In many spaces and moving forward, we will continue to build ties of sisterhood and solidarity and take strategic action for a more peaceful world.

Name of event: It Takes Two to Tango: Sharing Experiences of Working with Women's Rights and Engaging Men and Boys: Approaches on a Joint Agenda for Gender Justice

Organised by: MenEngage Alliance, WILPF, Stony Brook University, Mosaic, BreakThrough, and Sonke Gender Justice

Themes: Participation, sexual and gender-based violence, human rights, justice

On 18 March 2016, MenEngage Alliance together with WILPF, Stony Brook University, Mosaic, BreakThrough and Sonke Gender Justice held an event entitled "It takes Two to Tango: Sharing experiences of working with women's rights and engaging men and boys approaches on a joint agenda for gender justice." Participants included: Joni van de Sand (Global Coordinator, MenEngage Alliance); Joy Onyesoh (President, WILPF Nigeria); Phoebe Schreiner (US Country Director, Breakthrough); Cliff Leek (Doctoral Candidate for the Department of Sociology, Stony Brook University); Anthony Keedi (Program Manager, Abaad); Kerryn Rehse (Programme Manager, Mosaic) and Andre Lewaks (National MenCare Coordinator, Sonke Gender Justice.)

The event recognised that there increasing support from women's rights and gender equality organisations for engaging men and boys in gender justice; and further that the importance of working with men and boys to transform harmful notions of masculinity is receiving increasing recognition from the international community. This roundtable dialogue invited an open discussion on these trends and their impacts on women, women's organisations, and shared goals to achieve gender justice for all.



Joy Onyesoh at "It Takes Two to Tango" (Photograph by Lyna Zaim, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Gender equality advocates who attended the panel discussion on one hand urged their fellow advocates to engage men and boys as a complement to empowering women and girls and pursuing gender justice. According to Onyesoh, in some cultural contexts women need men's permission to pursue their education, training, and work on gender justice issues. Therefore, the participation and involvement of men will contribute to the creation of intersectionality. Several different approaches to doing so were proposed by different speakers; each introduced different principles, strategies, normative frameworks and policy approaches that have emerged from their work.

Considering that men can be more likely to listen to other men, men's voices can be critical. A major obstacle that men have to face while working on gender equality is that men may fear stigmatisation by the community when they challenge gender norms by defending women's rights. Phoebe Schreiner suggested that over time, this challenge to gender norms will hopefully become uncontroversial. In her view, long-term commitment of men to the issue can change the situation eventually.

Speakers also brought attention to the need to go beyond "engaging men" to transforming violent masculinities and eradicating militarised political economic systems of violence. As long as "manhood" is tied up with the glorification of violence and the global war system, eradicating personal violence will be limited and broader institutions of violence will continue.



Anthony Keedi at "It Takes Two to Tango"(Photograph by Lyna Zaim, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

To promote a transformative vision and build alliances across gender, speakers affirmed the need for safe spaces where people of the same gender can share experiences and build visions for change, in addition to spaces where different groups create alliances across different experiences. Leek noted that while gender equality conversations often create women's issues spaces, "Men and boys [also] need to have their gendered spaces." Keedi also suggested creating spaces in which men, women, and gender-queer gender equality advocates can share dialogue, meet and build partnerships.

Name of event: The Syrian Regional Crisis - A Women's Rights Perspective on Humanitarian Action and Protection

Organised by: WILPF, Care International and the UK NGO CSW Alliance

Themes: Participation, peacebuilding, human rights, sexual and gender-based violence

On 18 March 2016, WILPF, in collaboration with Care International and the UK NGO CSW Alliance, held an event entitled, "The Syrian Regional Crisis - A women's rights perspective on humanitarian action and protection." Participants included Hivin Kaku (Executive Director, Bihar Relief Organisation, Syria); Dima Al-Karadsheh (Gender Advisor, CARE Jordan); Asma Khader (President, Sisterhood Is Global Institute, Jordan) and Laila Alodaat (Crisis Response Programme Manager, WILPF.)

Participants analysed how the plunge into crisis over the last six years has devastated the Syrian people and created "patriarchal and crisis mentality" that has created particular gendered risks. According to Alodaat, WILPF consultations with grassroots Syrian activists in 2015 show that despite Syria being the best documented conflict in history, the analysis is wrong: most analysis fails to address the root causes of the war. According to these consultations with Syrian people, "impunity is the root of all evils" and "instead of arming more, we must deal with the problem at its source." As such,

“sexual and gender based violence is part of a cycle of violence and a war economy, all of which needs to be addressed.”



Hivin Kaku speaking at “The Syrian Regional Crisis: A Women’s Rights Perspective on Humanitarian Action and Protection.” (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

In the midst of crisis it is critical to invest in long-term prevention as a complement to short term crisis response action. “No sustainable development – and no sustainable development goals – can be implemented under armed conflict” said Khader. Participants discussed the destruction of basic social institutions in Syria: there is a complete collapse of the health system, with 82 hospitals targeted and collapsed by the Syrian regime and 40 health facilities destroyed by Russia in 2015, which have resulted in skyrocketing maternal mortality, 80% of which could have been avoided with adequate health care. There are major gaps in basic services for refugees, shelters for women survivors of violence are not available, trafficking in girls has skyrocketed with early marriages more than quadrupling (3.8% to 13.8%) in the last six years, and families in camp often get packed three per tent where there is not even enough space for all to sleep. The LGBTQI community faces particular threats, and a lack of nationality documentation means 600 thousand Syrian Kurds and their children will be stateless for life. Within these dire conditions, it is difficult to balance basic needs of a human being and protection, psychological care, empowerment, and space for women, to be not just victims but agents of change.

Participants critiqued the artificial disconnect between development and peace which facilitates a short-term view of crisis response rather than a long-term crisis prevention approach. “Arms impact women negatively all the time, including through explosives and small arms,” stated Alodaat. “If bombs are coming from planes, how can we talk about ‘protecting women’ if we cannot strip away the bombs?” asked Kaku. “During the [February 2016] donor conference on Syria, 230 Russian airstrikes occurred in one town – 97 thousand people were dislocated, over 30 thousand stopped at the border for a

week. How can we talk about resilience if the basics are missing?” As one participant noted: “Things are not going to start getting better until we stop the mass extermination of the Syrian people.”

Supporting local women-led civil society holistically is critical to addressing on-going needs. However, inadequate financing for women-led civil society, changing donor priorities, and a narrow focus on counter-terrorism has increased the risks for women human rights defenders and service providers and reduced the scope for their impact. “All we find is funding for counter-terrorism” said Kaku. “All we are doing is supporting women as a tool to counter terrorism; but women are human beings: they are not just an instrument to combat violence.” She called for donors and activists not to “just do a check box” on gender, and not just to focus on sexual and gender based violence. According to Alodaat, “Donors must stop looking down on people who do the work, putting them at risk of insurmountable threats. I am sick of 2-3 day trainings on SGBV and justice. Civil society leaders are competent. Look at them. We need to learn from them not teach them!” She shared examples of how despite restrictions by ISIS/Daesh on art and culture, activists have continued to find ways to teach art, dance and sing across cultures. “They will not identify their work as counter terrorism, countering violent extremism, or peace, but we need to support them.”



Laila Alodaat speaking at “The Syrian Regional Crisis: A Women’s Rights Perspective on Humanitarian Action and Protection”
(Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Ensuring women peace activists’ substantive participation in peace processes is also critical to building democratic peace. Al-Karadsheh commented: “I think men need to make the case to be involved in peace talks, because it is usually men who make a mess of it!” Men with guns dividing up power is a recipe for conflict re-emergence. Lasting and democratic peace must be built especially on inclusive governance with women’s full and substantive participation and rights, systems of restorative justice, and strong social and economic rights. Khader noted: “when it comes to military affairs,

everyone is intervening. But when it comes to women's rights and participation in conflict, countries step aside."

Recommendations included:

- Stop the war. Ensure ceasefires. Work towards a political solution;
- Support civil society groups through both through solidarity and funding, so people in Syria know you care;
- Provide legal status to refugees, strengthen funding for refugees, and take action to ensure refugees can return to their homeland to live in peace with human rights;
- Provide refugee work permits which are gender sensitive in addition to broader programming and services;
- Ensure clear registration practices that recognise grassroots women's accountability work and enable women to form their own civil society organisations and engage in refugee response;
- Increase access to decent and safe work for women; and
- Create national policy frameworks so that women's organisations who are doing work with refugees on the ground can register and continue their important work.

Name of event: Expanding Gender Equality, Unbinding the Gender Binary

Organised by: WILPF US

Themes: Participation, human rights

On 21 March 2016, WILPF US held an event entitled "Expanding Gender Equality, Unbinding the Gender Binary." Participants included Brandy Robinson (UN delegate for Status of Women and Director, WILPF US); Shawna Wakefield (Associate, Gender at Work); Leigh Ann van der Merwe (Director, Social Health and Empowerment Feminist Collective) and Yee Won Chong (Founder, Say This not That.) Discussion supported WILPF's ongoing advocacy to overcome gendered systems of exploitation, militarised masculinity, and violence, and take concrete action for for peace and freedom for all people.

During this event, the three panelists shared their experience with transgender issues and initiatives that are carried out in the US and in South Africa to overcome social barriers and to promote trans people's inclusion in the socio-economic lives of their respective country. They also called for a new definition of the concepts of family and parenthood. The panel also explained how changed mentalities is a prerequisite solving of these issues.

Wakefield pointed out that, despite undeniable progress on gender issues, numerous challenges faced by trans people remain unaddressed and concrete application of established principles is still lacking. Gender at Work has created an analytical framework to map areas where gender-friendly initiatives are still to be carried out. This diagram also allows to spot “sticky rules” existing under the surface. According to Wakefield, most of these rules “stem from patriarchal systems and construct limiting norms for gender”, making people insensitive to gender issues and generating transphobia.

The panelists deplored a gender-binary system that leads trans people to struggle with inadequate services: issues with citizenship are still very common (e.g. the case of Nadia Swanepoel, who went on a hunger strike to protest against the Department of Home Affairs Discrimination) as well as inadequate health care services, they said.

Van der Merwe suggested that this can be overcome by addressing the existing issues based on insights from the grassroots and by better defining the articulation between trans-feminism and feminism, i.e. by recognizing transwomen as women, “trans women are attacked because they are women”, she reminded. According to Wakefield, this can also be solved by promoting reflexive spaces where all genders can be discussed, by changing power relation via support to advocates. This is exactly what Say This Not That has successfully worked on with activists in conservative states of the US.



Yee Won Chong at "Expanding Gender Equality, Unbinding the Gender Binary" (Photograph by Marta Bautista, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Building on his experience, Chong reminded the audience that transgender people are often trapped in a vicious cycle starting with rejection from their relatives, increasing the risk of homelessness, jeopardizing their access to education, worsening their

vulnerability to discrimination at work, leading to an increased isolation. He also deplored that the challenges mentioned above cannot be addressed efficiently without precise and reliable data, but that “in a gender-binary society, there is necessarily a lack of data on trans people.”

b) Summaries from Selected Side Events at CSW60

Name of event: Amplifying Women's Voices for Peace and Rights during Conflict: Experiences from OPT and Yemen

Organised by: Women Peacemakers Program and Partners

Themes: Peacebuilding, conflict prevention, human rights, implementation, participation, justice

The “Amplifying Women's Voices for Peace and Rights during Conflict: Experiences From OPT and Yemen” event was held on 17 March, 2016. The panel was comprised of Lily Feidi (CEO and Strategic Planner, The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy aka MIFTAH); Mai Al Eryani (Board Member, Yemen Women Union) and Dr Bilkis Zabara (Director, the Gender-Development Research and Studies Center of Sana'a University.)

This event highlighted the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and Yemen. It also put them in the context perspective of occupation and civil war as well as of patriarchal systems.

The work achieved on UNSCR 1325 has been relatively successful in Palestine and, unlike in other Arab countries, the Palestinian government adopted the resolution in 2005. The panelists agreed that the WPS agenda represents an opportunity for Palestinian women to assert certain social rights while getting involved in broader human rights initiatives.

However, barriers remain. Feidi pointed out that authorities’ “clear lack of will to integrate women in the political spheres” remains a problem: for example, there are only two women ministers in the current cabinet, and just 17 women representatives have been elected in Congress out of 132 representatives.

Palestinian women also consider that the UN has not fulfilled its commitment to establish accountability regarding the Israeli occupation and to enforce laws preventing impunity. Without these prerequisites, “there will be no women real participation into politics” as the WPS agenda is overshadowed by other political priorities, Feidi said. She concluded by saying that despite internal and cultural barriers, “Palestinian women have a strong will to act and cannot afford sitting at home and watching as the Occupation goes on.”

Zabara suggested that, “in Yemen, we can say that the most critical issue today is the airstrike war that affects the whole country and mostly women.” She added that due to the conflict, the economy has been strongly damaged; electricity and water shortages are therefore widespread. The financial situation is deteriorating every day; the currency is weakening, and there is limited access to banks and funding channels.

The still-strong patriarchal system, coupled with increasing insecurity, have made it almost impossible for women to be involved in peace talks in Yemen. However, women continue to demand inclusion in the peace process to ensure women-specific issues relating to the current war context and for the future are addressed.

From a grassroots perspective, women are increasingly reluctant to get involved in social initiatives due to a rise in violence, such as an increase in the number of so-called “honour crimes.” “Many women activists have been attacked on the social media”, Al Eryani deplored, adding that this has had a substantial psychological impact on some women and there is still very little support for them: only two shelters (managed by the UN) in the country are dedicated to women, and hospitals do not receive financial aid anymore.

As Al Eryani explained, a key challenge to making women more efficient and present in the peace process is to better coordinate their actions on the ground. The UN organised a workshop in Cyprus to train Yemenite women on this. Despite this progress, however, the country still has to define a National Action Plan with a clear strategy to pave the way for their empowerment and peace ambitions.

Name of event: High Level Side Event: Programme on Women, Peace and Security: From United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325(2000) to 2242 (2015)

Organised by: Spain, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA)

Themes: Participation, implementation.

On 14 March, Spain, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) held an event entitled “Programme on Women, Peace and Security: From United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) to 2242 (2015).” The long-list of panelists included: Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); H.E. Claudia Pascual, Minister, National Service for Women (SERNAM), Chile; H.E. Chandra Prakash Mainal, Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Nepal; H.E. Susana Camarero Benitez, Secretary of State for Equality and Social Services, Spain; Ambassador Marriet Schuurman, NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for Women; Peace and Security; Ambassador Mara Marinaki, Principal Advisor on Gender and the UNSCR 1325, European Union; Ms. Nieves Rico, Chief, Division for Gender

Affairs, ECLAC; Ms. Mehrnaz Mostafavi, Chief, UN Human Security Trust Fund; and Ms. Lia van Brookhaven, Executive Director, Human Security Collective. Furthermore, special remarks were made by Ms. Cristina Juarranz de la Fuente, General Director of Multilateral, Horizontal and Financial Cooperation, Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development; and Ms. Adoracion Mateos Tejada, General Director for Human Resources, Ministry of Defense, Spain.



Mehrnaz Mostafavi, Chief of the UN Human Security Unit, at the event (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Participants discussed the intersection between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on one hand, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda on the other. In the face of ongoing financing and implementation gaps of the WPS agenda, they explored how the new development agenda's call for action presents an opportunity to redouble efforts to resolve and prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries, including through ensuring that women have a role in peace-building and state-building.

As part of building on these synergies, the organisers launched a new programme: the Women, Peace and Security global training programme. Its main goal is to support women in conflict zones, by building capacity of peacekeeping and civilian personnel on key aspects around the WPS Agenda. The importance of this Programme was highlighted by Benitez, Spain's Secretary of State for Equality and Social Services when she said that "When there is armed conflict, it is often more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier."

Name of event: Women's Role in the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Organised by: Working Group of the Palestinian Rights Committee

Themes: Peace processes, conflict prevention, human rights, participation



Panelists and attendees during the event “Women’s Role in the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace” (Photograph by UNISPAL)

On 14 March 2016, the Working Group of the Palestinian Rights Committee held an event entitled, “Women’s Role in the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.” Participants included Sarah Taylor (Women, Peace and Security Advocate, Human Rights Watch); Hiba Hussein (Legal advisor to peace negotiations and member, Al-Mustakbal Foundation) and Lihi Joffe (Board member, the Coalition of Women for Peace.)

During this event, Palestinian and Israeli female activists presented their various experiences dealing with women’s status in Israel and Palestine. They particularly emphasised the ambiguous role played by women in the peace process: essentially being active on the ground, yet lacking power in negotiations. They also explained how this generates a vicious cycle of inefficient peace talks that, more often than not, disregard gender issues.

“On the ground, both Israelis and Palestinians are increasingly accepting the idea that women are necessary actors in the peace process,” Taylor said. She added that the UN, by publishing regular reports and fostering normative frameworks, had been a critical catalyst of this progress.

A couple of obstacles continue to prevent Palestinian women from gaining decision-making power. First, women’s legitimacy is challenged by the widespread idea that when involved in peace talks, women tend to “stand only for women’s rights”, Taylor explained. This is in spite of evidence showing that “when women have more than an observer role in a peace process, it has a longer durability and the talks are more conclusive.”

Second, the expertise they gained from the past Palestinian crisis is underestimated: thus, they usually play mere advocacy and technical support roles.

Third, as Hussein observed – drawing from her experience working in a law firm with young men – society does not fully welcome women at the senior level. She underlined,

though, that “when women join the resistance, as a consequence of war, the society accepts it.”

Joffe then discussed gender inequality in Israel and what she perceived as a “kind of oppression system against women” in which “violence against women is ignored.” This convinced her to engage in feminist movements during her studies and to ultimately join the Coalition for Women in Jerusalem. The Coalition for Women was created after the second Intifada, to fight racism and to empower women working on these issues. It then became an umbrella for other women-friendly associations and a shelter against censorship.

Joffe also described how rising censorship and intolerance has impacted activists’ lives. “I now hesitate before joining demonstrations in Tel Aviv”, she said. Joffe elaborated on racism (“I was educated to feel proud and superior over other people”, she revealed); on the Israeli government’s arbitrary policy towards Palestinians (“there are two states of law”); and on psychological barriers created by the media, explaining how these factors feed one another and jeopardise solidarity between the two camps.

She underlined, however, that women’s associations make a difference by bridging gaps: “There are informal connections between the two camps,” she said. “Sometimes they are able to really demonstrate their solidarity,” she added, giving the example of the two parties gathering at Qalandia checkpoint in 2015.

Name of event: Refugees and Displaced People, Victims of Terrorist Groups: Women and Girls Exposed to a Continuum of Sexual Violence and Exploitation

Organised by: France, CAP International, Foundation Scelles, and Mouvement Du Nid

Themes: Displacement and humanitarian response, human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, protection

On 16 March 2016, France, CAP International, Foundation Scelles and Mouvement Du Nid hosted an event entitled “Refugees and displaced people, victims of terrorist groups: Women and girls exposed to a continuum of sexual violence and exploitation.” Gregoire Thery (Executive Director, CAP International); Laurence Rossignol (French Minister for Families, Childhood, and Women’s Rights); Zainab Hawa Bangura (Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict); Nadia Murad Basee Taha (Nobel Peace Prize nominee); Zoya Rouhana (Managing Director, KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation) and Yves Charpenel (President, Foundation Scelles) formed the panel at this event.

Participants in this event aimed to raise awareness of sexual violence used as a tactic of terrorism, and to argue that victims of sexual violence by terrorist groups should be considered victims of terrorism so they can access adequate reparations, services and livelihood support. More specifically, the panelists called for the immediate release of

the thousands of women and girls who are still held captive and are sexually abused by terrorist groups in the Middle East and in Africa and Syria. Referring to the common responsibility of all Member States to share the “refugee burden”, panelists also demanded these states prioritise the asylum process from refugees coming from “the burning area.”

Discussing the role of sexual violence as an instrument of war, participants urged the international community to consider needs of women while developing counter-terrorism policies. “Sexual violence in conflict is the way to gain power and to control the territory”, Bangura explained.

Given the number of women being sold on open markets in Raqqa or being held captive by ISIL/Daesh, counter-terrorism strategies cannot be developed without considering women’s needs. “We cannot afford violence against women”, Rossignol said.

In this regard, Basee Taha suggested that the international community start thinking about how international treaties could be more effective. She also expressed her concerns about the lack of will expressed by the international community to free women held captive by ISIL/Daesh. She explained that she had spoken with the representative of a variety of Member States and even attended the Security Council meeting; however, these actions, disappointingly, have not yet prompted any action from any Member States.

“What happens to us is genocide. For three months I have been delivering this message, but international community is irresponsible”, Basee Taha lamented.



Nadia Murad Basee Taha and her translator during the event “Refugees and Displaced People, Victims of Terrorist Groups: Women and Girls Exposed to a Continuum of Sexual Violence and Exploitation” (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, Peacewomen/WILPF)

Event name: Together To End Violence against Women in the MENA/Asia Region: Lessons Learned from Iran, Tajikistan, Egypt and Lebanon

Organised by: International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, human rights, protection, rule of law and security sector reform, displacement and humanitarian response, reconstruction and peacebuilding

On 15 March 2016, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) hosted “Together To End Violence against Women in the Mena/Asia Region; Lessons Learned From Iran, Tajikistan, Egypt and Lebanon .” This event gathered Don Steinberg (Representative, World Learning); Somayeh Rashid from Iran; Hanaa Edwar (Secretary-General, Al-Amal Association, Iraq); Sussan Tahmasebi (ICAN, Iran); Amal Elmohandes (Director of the Women Human Rights Defenders Program, Nazra for Feminist Studies, Egypt); and Mufara Hamidova (Lawyer and Manager, League of Women Lawyers of Tajikistan.)

During this event, the participants discussed the challenges still ahead in fighting gender inequality and violence against women in the MENA region and Central Asia. They reiterated that these two regions are some of the most exposed regions to gender inequality and violence against women. Panelists acknowledged the cultural aspect of gender-based violence in these regions, but also underlined how it has been fuelled by the deteriorating economic and political landscape over the past few years. Two levels of gender inequality were addressed during the event: domestic violence: both inequality increased by the war/post-war context, and systemic barriers to equality.

The panelists highlighted how cultural traditions can facilitate violence against women and gender inequality. They suggested that, in some countries of the MENA region, violence against women is still considered a symbol of masculinity. Edwar explained how deep-rooted mentalities in Iraq impact female genital mutilation (FGM.) The practice is facilitated by tribal traditions in the Kirkuk region, as well as the inadequate enforcement of laws, underpinned by the reluctance by the legal sector to accept women’s right to divorce.

The participants showed how inadequate legal institutions can exacerbate cultural assumptions that promote violence against women. Rashid said that “legal discrimination remains women’s biggest issue” in Iran. Edwar shared this view in relation to Iraq, where “in the case of adultery, men are convicted to six months in prison and women to life imprisonment.” In Egypt, Elmohandes pointed out, “in the case of domestic violence, either there are no laws, or they are not in the favor of the woman.” She added that attitude as this reflected in the way cases of sexual assaults on the street are assessed: “[every time,] the Government was denying the occurrence of these issues.” Steinberg deplored the fact that, in many cases, the judicial system

would not help women file a complaint. In addition, offices are not open at night when most domestic violence cases occur, and in some countries the victim is required to complain in the first 10 hours following the aggression. Psychological and legal support for victims is, additionally, often missing due to a lack of people working in those fields, Hamidova said.

According to Steinberg, “the active militarisation of societies in the MENA region” is another significant challenge. The economic and political situations in MENA and the post-war situation in Tajikistan have exacerbated issues of violence against women, while some issues such as polygamy and so-called “honour crimes” have reemerged. Rashid pointed out that according to the UNICEF, 70% of girls [in Iran] are married under 18. Edwar referred to the trafficking and sexual slavery of girls in Iraq, deploring those practices.

The panel, nevertheless, underlined that many positive initiatives had emerged in the region. They referred to a number of organisations that aim at strengthening women’s role in politics and in society, as well as prevention initiatives in rural areas, hotlines and campaigns to replace the word “victim” with “survivor.” Based on his experiences in the US and in Mexico, Steinberg recommended that 24-hour police offices be opened to hear women’s reports. He also recommended further trainings/conferences to help female survivors to share their experiences of trauma, and to raise men’s awareness of violence issues.

Event name: Gender and the SDGs: the Outcome, the Processes, and the Prospects
Organised by: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Oxfam, and The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-New York Office
Themes: Implementation, participation, human rights

On 14 March 2016, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD); Oxfam, and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung NYC hosted an event entitled “Gender and the SDGs: The Outcome, the Processes, and the Prospects.” This event gathered Valeria Esquivel (Gender and Development Research Coordinator, UNRISD); Shahra Razavi (Chief of Research and Data, UN Women); Corina Rodriguez Enriquez (Representative, Development Alternatives with Women for a New era (DAWN); Caroline Sweetman (Editor, Gender and Development) and Jessica Woodroffe (Chair, UK Gender and Development Network.)

The event highlighted the importance of an integrated approach to sustainable development that strengthens conflict prevention and peace, and the importance of ensuring that the SDGs and 2030 agenda is implemented through a women’s human rights framework.



Shahra Razavi at "Gender and the SDGs: the Outcome, the Processes, and the Prospects" (Photograph by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung–New York Office)

During this event, the panel contextualised and assessed the SDGs and the MDGs. Paying particular attention to the dedicated SDGs on gender equality (Goal 5) and peaceful societies (Goal 16), this event provided an opportunity to critically analyse the diverse tools available, at both national and international levels, to achieve gender equality and peace. It also provided a platform to briefly address the broader political economy of exploitation and violence, as participants also questioned assumptions underlying growth-based economic models and the role of financial institutions in the achievement of the agenda.



Panelists at "Gender and the SDGs: the Outcome, the Processes, and the Prospects" (Photograph by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung–New York Office)

Razavi reminded the audience that the strength of the SDGs is the importance they attribute to human rights, and to the interconnection between issues and actors. Razavi later explained that the human rights dimension of the agenda also encompasses accountability.

Esquivel said that due to the intersectionality of gender equality, environmental, social and economic issues, these various issues should be further integrated into future initiatives and plans. These issues are still very often considered as part of a zero-sum game, she explained, so “there is a need to tackle them and to reduce the tension between them.” This is crucial to empowering women and girls in fundamental areas such as migration, agriculture and health, she suggested.

The participants questioned the very text of the SDG agenda, quoting the ambition of “leaving no one behind”, which implicitly suggests a “charity approach” and may, therefore, actually contradict the notion of “sustainability.”

Esquivel added that corporations, too, should be urged to contribute to achieving the goals. The panel pointed out that this included being transparent on tax issues, which is not mentioned in the agenda, and so are speculative activities (e.g. 2007 food prices crisis.)

Participants also questioned the role played by financial institutions, and especially by the IMF, in the SDG agenda. “The problem with financial institutions is their intrinsic bias,” one pointed out. Citing the example of Greece’s debt negotiations, the panelist said that the “tables are not flat”, which leads to a problem of ineffective global governance. As they concluded: “there is a global governance, but it is done by the wrong people.”

Finally, the panelists addressed challenges with implementation of the agenda: first, it does not provide specific mechanisms for implementation; and second, “its text body is country-based.” As they pointed out, these shortcomings increase the risk of poor national implementation and of “cherry-picking”; that is, governments are very likely to try to implement only the less controversial measures, such that “the implementation [would] be a political challenge.”

Event name: Securing Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes

Organised by: Permanent Missions of Ireland, of the Argentine Republic and of the Principality of Liechtenstein, UN Women, and Justice Rapid Response

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, justice, rule of law and security sector reform, human rights, displacement and humanitarian response, protection

On 16 March 2016, the Permanent Missions of Ireland, the Argentine Republic and the Principality of Liechtenstein, together with UN Women and Justice Rapid Response (JRR) held an event entitled “Securing Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender Based Crimes.”

The panel was composed of Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani (Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the UN); Christian Wenaweser (Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the UN); Martín Garcia Moritán (Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the UN); Tim Mawe (Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN); Federica Tronchin (SGBV and MENA Region Programme Manager, Justice Rapid Response); Alison Davidian (Transitional Justice Policy Specialist, UN Women) and Renifa Madenga (SGBV investigator deploy.)

The discussion provided an opportunity for member states, UN entities and civil society to learn from expert investigators about their recent experiences documenting conflict-related sexual and gender-based crimes for UN commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. Speakers discussed the implications of these findings for the UN and beyond, and the importance of documenting conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a critical first step toward accountability. “It is hard to fight impunity, if you do not know where the crimes are being committed”, Davidian acknowledged.

Recent years have been marked by mass displacements and a rise in violent extremism, while other protracted conflict situations remain critical. SGBV crimes have featured across the range of these contexts, including in the perpetration of rape, forced marriage, and sexual slavery. As Wenaweser pointed out, “people often do not understand the dimension of this problem.” The sensitivities and high level of trauma surrounding SGBV crimes, including the vulnerability of victims, means that investigators require special training. Another problem is the fact that many of these crimes remain undocumented, since women often do not have adequate access to justice.

In this context, speakers highlighted the importance of the JRR-UN Women partnership to catalyze the ability of international and national mechanisms to secure accountability for these crimes. As the speakers made clear, it is especially important that these mechanisms ensure linguistic and cultural diversity, and move toward their deterrence and prevention.

Name of event: Protecting Human Rights of Women Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Organised by: Permanent Mission of Bulgaria, Council of Europe

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, protection, human rights, and displacement and humanitarian response

On 14 March 2016, the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria and the Council of Europe hosted an event entitled “Protecting human rights of women refugees and asylum

seekers." The event aimed at discussing the challenges faced by refugee and women asylum seekers. It also aimed to examine the effectiveness of practical measures contained in the Council of Europe's standards on responding to refugee concerns.

The panel was composed of Sergiy Kyslytsya (Chairperson, Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe and Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine); Purna Sen (Director, Policy Division, UN Women); Salla Saastamoinen (Director for Equality, European Commission); Marcy Hersh, (Senior Advocacy Officer, Women's Refugee Commission); Velina Todorova (Associate Professor, University of Plovdiv and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) and Fakhra Salimi (Director, MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women, Norway.) The moderator was Marja Ruotanen (Director, Human Dignity and Equality, Council of Europe.)



Inside the side event at UN Headquarters in New York (Photograph by Sergiy Kyslytsya/Twitter)

During the event, the importance of focusing on women as refugees and asylum seekers was emphasised by Kyslytsya, who pointed out that "Women are the minority. This factor makes their situation even more difficult."

As female refugees flee their homes and countries in search for safety and a better life, they face growing threats of violence, systematic sexual abuse and non-respect for their rights. As Todorova explained, "Sex work is often the only way to get money to immigrate." She added that women often lack safe spaces within which to receive necessary training and mental health support upon their arrival to Europe, despite UN Women's and UNHCR's efforts. In camps, there are no effective standards for managing risk and violence against women and information is not provided in the languages some refugees speak, Todorova claimed.

The participants further discussed how to incorporate the relevant European Conventions, including the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention); the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention); and the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, into daily decision-making.

In the context of the protracted crisis, Sen added that women needed training and legal support to help them overcome the socio-economic barriers they face as refugees. At the current stage, the afore-mentioned Conventions adopted by European Countries alone are ineffective in supporting women's and girls' rights. This is extremely problematic, given that as Sen reminded the audience, "60% of refugees in Europe are women." As such, Ruotanen emphasised that, "Protecting human rights of women refugees and asylum seekers requires a very urgent, coordinated approach."

Name of event: Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development

Organised by: Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC), World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUMO), United Methodist Women, Global Fund for Women

Themes: Human rights, justice, peacebuilding

On 17 March, 2016, the Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC); World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUMO); United Methodist Women; and the Global Fund for Women hosted an event entitled "Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development." The panelists included Sergiy Kyslytsya (Chairperson, Gender Equality, Commission of the Council of Europe and Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine); Sergiy Ustymenko (Deputy Minister on Social Policy of Ukraine); Maryna Rudenko (Women's Information Consultative Center); Lesya Nechyporenko (Women's Information Consultative Center); and Moderator: Olena Suslova (Women's Information Consultative Center.)



Panelists during the event "Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WIILPF)

The event highlighted the human rights situation in conflict areas of Ukraine, the lack of women's involvement in peace negotiations and women's inability to access justice. Speakers also discussed legal restrictions that limit women's participation in the army and law enforcement.

According to Rudenko, "Ukrainian women are more active in defending their own rights than men." Nonetheless, as suggested by Nechyporenko, Ukrainian military forces still support gender stereotypes and implicitly link masculinity with militarism. Under order of the Ministry of Defense, women cannot serve in all types of military operations and when they do join the military, they face a lack of social protection and mental and physical support.



Panelists during the event "Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development" (Photograph by Marina Kumskova, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Victims of sexual and gender-based violence face their own distinct types of lack of support. The current justice system in Ukraine is not capable of addressing the problems faced by victims of abuse; one problem is that there are simply not enough women in law enforcement to adequately support and address the claims of women.

Women's role in building sustainable peace and in conflict resolution was also emphasised as a key reason for the state to implement UNSCR 1325. Briefly discussing the recently-adopted Ukrainian National Action Plan (NAP), Ustymenko mentioned that it is not only an instrument to achieve considerable equality but also a method of ensuring conditions for long-lasting peace. Panelists agreed that women's enhanced roles in decision-making processes will lead to the faster rehabilitation of female refugees and IDPs, combatants, survivors of sexual abuse and the development of

peaceful solutions to conflict. Thus, as Kyslytsya put it, “Investing in women’s rights is investing in resolution of huge problems.”

In the current situation, Ukraine is not able to address the problems of distinct groups of women, including civilians and refugees. Therefore, the speakers called for the need for increased collaboration between the state, civil society and international community to better support these women. As Ustymenko pointed out, “New challenges in Eastern Ukraine require new approaches developed in collaboration with all stakeholders.”

While NGOs are moving the Ukrainian Government to introduce some positive change, support is still needed to reform the security sector and military; to educate men and challenge violence and dominating masculinities; to strengthen accountability mechanisms; to mainstream gender in judicial reform; and to provide social support to women in the general population.

Name of event: In Conversation with #ImamsForShe Champions: Workshops on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Together

Organised by: Muslims for Progressive Values

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, protection, participation, human rights

On 23 March 2016, Muslims for Progressive Values hosted a panel discussion and workshop on tackling violence against women and girls. The panelists included Dr Khadija T. Moalla (Senior International, Human Rights Consultant, Tunisia); Ani Zonneveld (Founder and President, Muslims for Progressive Values, Malaysia/USA); Imam Mohamed Magid (All Dulles Area Muslim Society and Chairman, International Interfaith Peace Corps, Washington, DC, USA); Imam Shamsi Ali (Chairman, Al-Hikmah Mosque and Director, Jamaica Muslim Center, NY, USA); and Imam Khalfan Ellie Bukuru (Founder, Alliance des Imams du Corridor Nord pour le Developpement Humanitaire, Burundi.)



PeaceWomen fellow Joanna (L) at the event (Photograph by Muslims for Progressive Values)

The event focused on how to address the challenges facing women and girls in relation to Muslim religious leaders and teachings. Khadija started the event by giving an overview of the work she has done with engaging religious leaders in the Middle East, including in Tunisia. “Creating safe spaces and building trust is key when working with religious leaders,” she said.

Led by local and international imams, small groups then discussed the role of Islam and culture in perpetuating female genital mutilation (FGM), forced early marriages and girls’ education, and conceptualised these practices as key obstacles to overcome to achieve gender equality. Each small group then brainstormed recommendations on how address the issue.

These proposed recommendations for stopping FGM included understanding that it a cultural/historical practice that predates Islam; the need for grassroots efforts; and including men’s engagement in the conversation. Some groups also emphasised the importance of understanding the practice as harmful and unnecessary from a medical and scientific perspective. Recommendations proposed for preventing forced early marriages included encouraging parents about letting their daughter make their own “sound” judgments; the lack of justification for the practice in the Quran; and pointing out the manipulation of the faith for monetary reasons. Recommendations proposed for increasing girl’s education included highlighting the need for female religious leaders; financing female scholarship; and changing of the narrative around an educated woman leaving her family.

As a whole, the various recommendations produced during the workshop were in line with PeaceWomen/WILPF’s extensive work to promote gender equality using women’s rights and human rights perspectives, and to strengthen women’s participation in public life.

Name of event: Is the Eradication of Violence Against Transgender Women Key to Our Achievement of Gender Equality and Sustainable Development?

Organised by: Legal Resource Centre

Themes: Human rights, participation

On 22 March 2016, The Legal Resource Centre hosted a panel discussion entitled “Is the Eradication of Violence Against Transgender Women Key to Our Achievement of Gender Equality and Sustainable Development?” Panelists included Busisiwe Deyi (Legal Resource Centre) and Leigh Ann van der Merwe (Social, Health And Empowerment Feminist Collective Of Transgender Women Of Africa.)

During this event, the panelists discussed the lack of LGBT-inclusive language in the CSW60's Agreed Conclusions. Speakers also took the opportunity to explain the work they are doing in their respective contexts, and to detail challenges they face in South Africa helping lesbians and trans women.

“At the first CSW, I was excited. At the next, I was hopeful. Now I’m just realistic,” Van der Merwe said of the lack of LGBT-inclusive language in the agreed conclusions. She also explained that people who are transitioning are particularly vulnerable under South African law, which isn’t flexible enough to accommodate these individuals. Indeed, they face lack of access to any public services such as education and medical emergency treatment if their outward gender doesn’t match the gender on their identification card.

Discussing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), van der Merwe emphasised that activists “do not need to reinvent the wheel.” She pointed out there are already protocols in place to address transgender women’s needs, but that enforcing them remains an issue. For example, in South Africa, even with LGBT-progressive legislation, loopholes exist that make navigating the law very difficult for transgender women, Deyi pointed out.

WILPF’s continued push to address women’s intersectionality is aligned with the Legal Resource Centre’s mission to push for recognition the rights of transgender women. It is WILPF’s belief that struggling to eradicate violence against all women, transgender women included, is key to the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development.

Name of event: Empowering and Building Resilience in Adolescent Girls: Implementing Gender Equality

Organised by: American Psychological Association, the NGO Committee on Children’s Rights, and International Council of Psychologists

Themes: Human rights, sexual and gender-based violence

On 23 March 2016, the American Psychological Association, the NGO Committee on Children’s Rights, and International Council of Psychologists hosted an event entitled, “Empowering and Building Resilience in Adolescent Girls: Implementing Gender Equality.” The panel included Janet Sigal (APA Main Representative, United Nations); June F. Chisholm, (Professor of Psychology, Pace University); and Somiari Demm (MA/M.) The moderator was Dr. Roseanne Flores (APA Representative, United Nations) and the discussant was Ayorkor Gaba (APA Representative, United Nations.)

The event focused on the effects of trauma in various cultural contexts. Its focus on the trauma caused by a range of violence highlighted the importance of addressing root causes of violence for human flourishing and sustainable peace.

Chisholm started by discussing the increased rate of cyberbullying in communities and its relationship to lowered self esteem. Other panelists then discussed global barriers facing girl's empowerment, as well as the experience of trauma and how it is treated.

Demm then discussed the Nigerian Chibok girls, who were kidnapped by the extremist group Boko Haram in 2014. These girls escaped from Boko Haram and were subsequently sponsored by a charity to come to the US to receive treatment for trauma. She shared her work with them and the importance of including cultural norms and rituals into trauma recovery.

Name of event: Change Artists: Using the Arts to Leverage Positive Change

Organised by: The Art of Influence: Breaking Criminal Traditions

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, participation

On 17 March 2016, The Art of Influence: Breaking Criminal Traditions held an event entitled "Change Artists- Using the Arts to Leverage Positive Change." The panel was composed of Cheryl Jefferson (Executive Producer, Breaking Criminal Traditions (BCT)); Professor Charles Gniech (Painter and Curator, BCT); Richard Laurence (Painter and Art Professor, Columbia College-Chicago) and Andrea Harris (Painter, Director, Large-Chicago Chapter and member, UN Women.)

This event focused on the ability of artists to reach out to the audience to convey messages on behalf of survivors of various abuses. Such innovative approaches are critical to moving from legal to cultural change. Cheryl Jefferson kicked off the event by reminding the audience how ballet performances had subtly carried political messages in the Soviet Union, and how the audience had been educated to "read between the lines." Building on her experience working at the Breaking Criminal Tradition center, which is a gallery exhibiting political artwork, she explored how artists could create a narrative to raise awareness around a specific topic. As she explained, "the beauty of fine art helps people access these difficult topics [and] that consciousness is the first step toward changing these human rights violations worldwide."



Andrea Harris at "Change Artists: Using the Arts to Leverage Positive Change" (Photograph by Lyna Zaim, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Gniech discussed how to maximise the impact of art to better reach the audience. He claimed that articulating a clear and personal narrative, or grassroots insights, in the artistic proposal is crucial to delivering a faithful and innovative message.

Andrea Harris elaborated on this, saying that artists have to help victims' voices be heard. She, herself, started a series of female portraits after listening to the interview of a victim of violence who claimed that violence would not prevent her from speaking. The panel said this approach should be expanded in order to create communities of artists that develop solidarity and empathy all around the world. "The UN CSW allows us to take this work to an international level," Gniech noted.

Cheryl Jefferson rounded up the event, focusing on the key challenge of censorship when dealing with controversial issues. She underlined that security should remain a priority, but could be seen as an opportunity to explore new media and prompt further innovation. She gave the example of a female artist using colored sand instead of painting to make sure she could erase her pieces if needed. That method allowed her to prevent endangering herself and her family, yet be able to share her message, even for a moment.

Name of event: Listen to our Story: Empowering of Women in Less Privileged Areas: the Experience of Iran

Organised by: The Entrepreneurship Development Foundation (EDF) for Women and Youth

Themes: Participation, reconstruction and peacebuilding, human rights

On 16 March 2016, The Entrepreneurship Development Foundation for Women and Youth (EDF) held an event involving EDF member Marta Vezvaei, another EDF member and Nadereh Chamlou (former Senior Advisor, World Bank.) During this event, the panel presented initiatives being carried out to empower women in rural areas of Iran, and explained how EDF is trying to develop a culture of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in isolated areas of Iran, via network and capacity building.



Marta Vezvaei from EDF during the event "Listen to our story: Empowering of Women in Less Privileged Areas: The experience of Iran" (Photograph by Lyna Zaim, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

The organisation mostly targets women college graduates and woman-headed families, and seeks to raise awareness and interest for entrepreneurship amongst younger women by creating entrepreneurial rooms in schools, as well as by providing vocational education. Its major areas of interest also involve entrepreneurship and family business; social entrepreneurship; youth startups and self-employment; and entrepreneurial opportunities.

EDF's different projects have focused on reaching the most isolated areas of the country, and the organisation has focused on building a tailored model, taking into account cultural specificities in order to better address women's needs. The panel said the organisation has had a great impact since its inception in 2005.

Chamlou then gave an overview of the funding channels available for projects in isolated parts of the country, and particularly infrastructure projects (such as for roads or community facilities) funded by the World Bank. She mentioned for instance the creation in 2005 of a local development fund by the World Bank, covering micro and SME financing, amongst other things. She noted that international sanctions have had

an important impact on funding for local organisations' projects and have also impacted various World Bank projects.

While microfinance for women's empowerment is one important step, it will be critical to expand the scope of vision and ensure macro-finance and other global structures are transformed to ensure gender equality and women's human rights for human rights, gender justice and sustainable peace.

Name of event: The Parliamentary Dimension of Combatting Violence Against Women
Organised by: European Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe
Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, participation, implementation, human rights

On 14 March 2016, the European Parliament in collaboration with the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe held an event entitled "The Parliamentary Dimension of Combating Violence against Women." The panel was composed of Iratxe Garcia Perez (European Parliament); Dalia Leinarte (Vice-Person, CEDAW Committee); and Sahiba Gafarova (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.)



Dalia Leinarte, Iratxe Garcia Perez, Sahiba Gafarova during the event "The Parliamentary Dimension of Combatting Violence Against Women" (Photograph by Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence)

This event was an open discussion, allowing the audience to actively contribute to panelists' conversation. The attendees generally appeared to agree that violence against women stems from women's lack of visibility in the political spheres. They also agreed that governments should endeavour to better integrate women into politics, affording them decision-making power in order to better fight SGBV and achieve gender equality.

Gafarova remarked during the discussion that "violence against women still exists because most criminals escape legal proceedings." Participants agreed on the crucial

role women should therefore be playing in the judicial sphere to enforce laws. They also highlighted the importance of solid legislative frameworks to support and protect women. Leinarte underlined that a first step for protecting women is to ensure that laws are not discriminatory to women, giving the example of the Polish medical care system that remains problematic in regards to abortion for victims of rape.

Several members of the audience claimed that having more women with decision-making power in Parliaments would allow for better implementation and monitoring of legal instruments relating to women's rights. Women are still not involved when it comes to writing reports and making recommendations on such instruments, the panel said. Gafarova remarked that monitoring the implementation of conventions is still particularly difficult. A UK activist added that sometimes conventions are not even ratified because they are considered as too costly, leading her to question the importance of these issues to governments.

Fiona Richardson, Australia's first Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, explained that KPIs are crucial for tracking progress on gender equality and making official bodies *de facto* accountable for achieving related goals. She explained how Australia has developed a "family violence index" based on indicators such as hospital presentations, number of convicted perpetrators, homelessness, to effectively measure achievements.

To conclude the event, a member of international network Women in Parliament noted that despite numerous partnerships to promote women's empowerment through Parliaments, additional networks still need to be built. Participants called for more coordination on a global level, since, as a French attendee remarked: "Violence is a phenomenon that occurs everywhere."

Name of event: Show Me the Money: How Governments Allocate and Audit Funds to Achieve Gender Equality as a 2030 Sustainable Development Goal

Organised by: The Philippines

Themes: Implementation, participation, human rights

On 16 March, The Philippines hosted an event with the title: "Show Me the Money: How Governments Allocate and Audit Funds to Achieve Gender Equality as a 2030 Sustainable Development Goal." The panelists included representatives of the Indonesian and The Philippines Governments.

This event was an occasion for representatives from Indonesia and The Philippines to share best practices and discuss challenges around budgeting and auditing the implementation of the WPS Agenda in their respective countries. Both countries

emphasised the importance of financial and operational audits to ensure the effective implementation of the agenda, and to optimise the use of funds allocated to specific programs. They both demonstrated how a top-down approach could help empower beneficiaries.



Attendees at “Show Me the Money: How Governments Allocate and Audit Funds to Achieve Gender Equality as a 2030 Sustainable Development Goal” (Photograph by Lyna Zaim, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

Both countries agreed that a key first step for efficiently working on the achievement of gender equality had been to set up SDG-related National Action Plans to increasingly integrate gender into national and sub-national goals, and to increase the part of the national budget that is allocated to gender equality. According to members of the panel, The Philippines today allocates 5% of its budget to the achievement of gender equality.

Both countries agreed on the importance of developing accurate programs for empowering women and young girls, but also for helping mothers on a day-to-day basis by strengthening specific programs (for instance, certain health care programs.) To ensure that these programs are appropriately funded and to prevent abuses, The Philippines has developed “program conditionalities”, making household beneficiaries “co-responsible” for the success of the program. Under this approach, for example, families must attend the program once a month, or must participate in community activities, promote and strengthen the implementation of the program.

The Philippines showed how embedding conditional funding into the promotion of WPS-related goals (such as Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”) in the SDGs scorecard has allowed the intersectionality of numerous social issues to be better addressed (for example, Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote

wellbeing for all at all ages,” is gendered in that it especially targets women and children.)

Finally, the panel listed a number of challenges that are still ahead, namely: awareness-raising among decision makers; the quick rotation of officials, the availability of sex-disaggregated data; the coverage of a large area; the shortage of resource persons; and the need for further monitoring.

Discussion brought attention to WILPF’s longstanding demands that National Action Plans on WPS ensure the substantive participation of civil society, take a holistic approach that particularly addresses conflict prevention and demilitarisation, and is fully financed and implemented including through a dedicated budget.

Name of event: Global Sexual Violence during Conflict: from the Balkans to Africa to the Middle East

Organised by: Columbia University (Harriman Institute of Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies)

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, protection, reconstruction and peacebuilding

On 22-23 March 2016, Columbia University held an event in the margins of CSW60 entitled, "Global Sexual Violence During Conflict: From the Balkans to Africa and the Middle East." The event included a keynote address by WILPF Secretary General Madeleine Rees: "Invisible or constructed? Sexual violence, men, women and war." It also included a film screening of the Kosovo documentary *Thinking of You* and panels addressing women's bodies as targets of ethnic cleansing and addressing the escalation of sexual violence in war from Africa to Syria.

Participants included Tanya Domi, Harriman Institute; Madeleine Rees, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom; Anna Di Lellio, New York University; Velma Šarić, BiH Post-Conflict Research Centre; Edita Miftari Fulbright Fellow at Clark University; and Jennifer Trahan New York University.

As Rees reminded participants, sexual violence is one part of a broader political economy of violence and war. Investing in violence prevention from a gender perspective requires urgent action to create political economies that eradicate the military industrial complex and associated cultures of violence and prioritise women's social and economic rights for democratic and sustainable peace.



Panelists at “Global Sexual Violence during Conflict: from the Balkans to Africa to the Middle East” (Photograph by NYU)

The documentary that was later screened, produced by Anna Di Lellio, tells the story of how women’s activists gathered in a football stadium in Pristina, Kosovo, to honour women survivors of war and to change the culture of isolation, resignation and shame that surrounds sexual violence in war.

After that, the panelists talked about wartime sexual violence in the Balkans. Regarding the war in Kosovo, Di Lellio pointed out that “The war really started... with this huge attack against Albanian women.” She claimed that it was very difficult for women to report those crimes “because of stigma, because of shame, and because there was nowhere else they could go but their own community.” At the end of the war, many survivors chose not to disclose this abuse “because there was no redress, justice and sympathy.”

Šarić pointed that “In the case of Bosnia, rape was used as a weapon of war in a massive scale”, and it was organised and severe. In fact, it is estimated that “Between April 1992 and January 1993, some 20,000 were raped”, although there are other estimates that the number is high as 50,000. Miftari emphasised the importance of recognising “these horrible acts against humanity and against women’s bodies.” She added that female bodies were a symbolic politicised male space and thus, a battlefield in a context between rival males. Finally, Trahan discussed the international legal framework regarding rape and claimed that the international community has “legal tools for these crimes” - still needs the will to use them.

Name of event: Challenges of Connecting the Dots: A FTF Event with Special Remarks by Colleagues of Berta Cáceres

Organised by: The Feminist Task Force, Kulu Women and Development, SIGLO XXIII, Jeganan Nepal, Niger Delta Women’s Movement for Peace and Freedom, and SASA Foundation

Themes: Human rights, participation

On 17 March, the Feminist Task Force, together with Kulu Women and Development, SIGLO XXIII, Jeganan Nepal, Niger Delta Women's Movement for Peace and Freedom, and SASA Foundation held the event, "Challenges of Connecting the Dots: Visions for a Women's 2015-2050 Agenda" at the Church Centre for the United Nations. Rosa Lizarde (Global Director, Feminist Task Force) moderated the panel, along with Emilia Reyes (Coordinator, Equidad de Género, México) and FTF network members Marta Benavides (SIGLO XXIII, Feminist Task Force and GCAP, El Salvador) and Jovita Mlay (Sasa Foundation, Feminist Task Force-Africa, Tanzania.) Bertha Zúñiga Cáceres (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras) also made special remarks.

The event examined the UN 2030 Agenda and 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted September 2015 by the UN. The SDGs are set to define the development agenda for the next fifteen years. According to panelists, although the SDGs commit to "leave no one behind," researchers and statisticians have shown that many, mostly the most vulnerable, will actually fall through the cracks.

Panelists shared grassroots experiences and priorities and demanded action for a feminist vision that goes beyond the SDGs and ensures accountability for a world of people over profit and ecological sustainability over exploitation for sustainable development and peace.

As part of the discussion, Bertha Zúñiga Cáceres of COPINH shared the powerful story of her murdered mother, environmental and indigenous activist and woman human rights defender, Berta Cáceres, who became a victim of the extractives development model who was "left behind" by her government and the Honduran justice system. Panelists shared opportunities for solidarity to call for justice for Berta, and to unite against a system of exploitation, militarism, and violence for sustainable development and peace.



Berta Cáceres' daughter Bertha, who spoke at the event. (Photograph by Feminist Task Force/Twitter)

Name of event: Addressing Violence against Women and Girls to Achieve Sustainable Development

Organised by: World Bank Group, Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University

Themes: Sexual and gender-based violence, protection, human rights, implementation

On 15 March, the World Bank Group and Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University held an event entitled “Addressing violence against women and girls to achieve sustainable development.” Speakers at the event included Natasha Stott Despoja (Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls); Åsa Regnér (Swedish Minister for Gender Equality); Zohra Rasekh (former Vice Chair, CEDAW Committee); and Zarizana Abdul Aziz (Director, Due Diligence Project on State Obligation to End Violence against Women.) The session was moderated by Diana Arango (Senior Gender-Based Violence and Development Specialist, World Bank Group); and featured closing remarks from Mary Ellsberg (Director, Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University.)



Panelists at “Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls to Achieve Sustainable Development” (Photograph by Gillian Bird, Australia UN/Twitter)

The event focused on the fact that any form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) undermines the achievement of sustainable development. In particular, the event examined the particular challenges associated with pursuing the 17 SDGs, which cannot be fully realized without first addressing the pervasive, global pandemic that is VAWG.

The universal and nature of VAWG was explained in detail by Arango, who has focused on gender cross-cutting solutions in her work at the World Bank Group. "Gender-based violence exists in every region, sector, and socioeconomic stratum," she told the crowd. "Sexual orientation and gender identity meets at an intersection that compounds gendered experiences of violence."

The speakers therefore agreed that global, local, and cross-cutting solutions are needed to ensure that VAWG is eliminated and the full set of social, economic, and sustainable development goals can be achieved.



Diana Arango of the World Bank speaks at the event. (Photograph by Bonney Corbin/Twitter)

Name of event: Women Paying the Price of the Failure of International Mechanisms to Protect Human Rights and the Failure of International Policies to Defeat Terrorism: How can the International Community Play a More Effective Role in Protecting Women's Human Rights?

Organised by: KAFA ("Enough") Violence and Exploitation (Lebanon), Syrian Women's League, Iraqi Al-Amal Association, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling– Palestine, and Kvinna Till Kvinna (Sweden)

Themes: Implementation, human rights, protection, justice, rule of law and security sector reform

On Wednesday 16 March 2016, KAFA ("Enough") Violence and Exploitation (Lebanon); Syrian Women's League, Iraqi Al-Amal Association, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling– Palestine, and Kvinna Till Kvinna (Sweden) hosted an event about international mechanisms to protect human rights and the failure of counter-terrorism policies. Participants included founder and Hanaa Edwar (Secretary-General, Al-Amal

Association, Iraq); Zoya Rouhana (Director, KAFA, Lebanon) and Randa Senioura (Director, Al-Haq, Palestine.)

This event examined the disconnect between the strong normative framework of the WPS agenda and the lack of accountability for its implementation. Panelists remarked that women human rights defenders and peace activists face a variety of urgent challenges. Widespread religious and political Islam has led to the heightening of State recognition of Sharia as the main source of legislation in some states including Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. ISIL/Daesh continues to engage in kidnapping, rape, trafficking, sexual slavery, and forced conversion to Islam. A recent UN Report recognised that certain ISIL/Daesh acts against members of the Yazidi ethnic group amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Further, the emergence of sectarian and terrorist groups, which capitalise on chaos, are threatening the social fabric in the region; they are fighting devastating civil wars that leave millions of people, mostly children and women, living in inhuman conditions. These factors also mean civilians including women and girls face sexual and gender-based violence as well as torture, assault, and displacement.

Repressive practices against Palestinians' rights are also ongoing, including restrictions of freedom of movement in Gaza, torn family units and communities, and refugees' exposure to poverty, homelessness and violence. In addition, tribal customs and traditions and religious fatwa have emerged as substitute for law in the absence of security and lawlessness. Widespread financial and administrative corruption are also present, and the chaos has resulted in serious consequences for women, including forced, early marriage, polygamy, trafficking, and impunity for crimes against women.

Despite these conditions, women-led civil society has achieved significant successes. Women's representation in a number of countries in the region has increased, while local women's participation in local councils is improving. In Tunisia and Morocco, gender equity measures now exist. Other countries have also adopted women quotas at the municipal level, often accompanied by women civil society's inclusion in peace processes. For example, the Iraqi Al-Amal Association has supported a female parliamentarians' programme, which has reached 800 women in the last two years.

While the downfall of government in Tunisia has justified contravention of women's rights under religious cover, women are demanding a civil state based on principles of equality, justice and the rule of law. Women are demanding that governments support the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), remove reservations, and be part of the optional protocol. Women have influenced governments, including through national strategies to combat Violence Against Women (VAW) in Iraq and related work in Jordan, Lebanon, and Algeria.

Although the Iraqi National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 remains unfulfilled due to a failure of resources allocated to implement it, women's organisations in countries in the region have worked tirelessly with local communities to build awareness and mobilise people around gender equality, citizenship and social cohesion.

It is not just women who have taken action. Women have also engaged men and gained their support for gender equality and peace issues. National-level networking has overcome sectarian, ethnic, and partisan divides. Women continue to work to build networks at local and regional level to combat sectarianism and create regional action plans on UNSCR 1325 and other action to promote democracy, citizenship, and social justice.

Panelists reminded activists of how civil society can take effective action in solidarity to support peace and gender justice. In particular, the global movement to Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights has had very positive impact. However, recent reaction against this, such as the UK's action to make the boycott divestment illegal, must be challenged. As Senioura noted, "Unless we make Israel as an occupying power pay the price of the occupation, and to respect and ensure international humanitarian law, we will not find change. We must pressure our governments to implement international agreements."

Event name: Women Peacekeeping Teams Use Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) Methods of South Sudan

Organised by: Nonviolent Peaceforce, Women Graduates USA, and the Institute for Inclusive Security

Themes: Peacekeeping, protection, reconstruction and peacebuilding, participation, peace processes

On 14 March, 2016, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP_ (2016 Nobel Peace Prize nominee), Women Graduates USA, and the Institute for Inclusive Security held an event titled "Women Peacekeeping Teams Use Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) Methods of South Sudan." Speakers included Mel Duncan (Co-founder, NP), Christopher Hold (South Sudan Deputy Director, NP), and Shannon Radsky (Protection Coordinator, NP.)

The talk highlighted women's important role in peacebuilding and civilian protection with specific focus on South Sudan's Women Peacekeeping Teams as an effective NP model of civilian engagement in a peaceful and unarmed capacity.



Attendees at “Women Peacekeeping Teams Use Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) Methods of South Sudan” (Photograph by NonViolent Peaceforce, South Sudan)

Throughout the talk, speakers working at the local level to implement NP strategies explained the method’s four-pronged approach: Proactive engagement and protection; conflict monitoring; relationship-building among all parties; and local capacity development.

The speakers remarked that nonviolent peaceforce methods, particularly those that actively and equitably engage women as leaders, are helping to establish and maintain peace around the world. As one of them explained: “more than 50 civil society organizations have, since 1990, utilized this unique approach in over 35 conflict zones.”

Radsky, who has on-the-ground experience working South Sudan, detailed her personal experience in a conflict area where women were routinely raped while venturing outside of civilian camps in search of food, water, and firewood. Once Women Peacekeeping Teams began accompanying women within the camps, attacks against women fell significantly, with none at all encountered while women were accompanied by the fierce female peacekeepers. The brave women of South Sudan’s Women Peacekeeping Teams make it clear that women are both human rights holders and essential agents of sustainable peace and security.

Event Name: From the Global to the Local: CEDAW Activism in the United States

Organised by: Women’s Intercultural Network (WIN), Leadership Conference Education Fund, and Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Themes: Human Rights, participation, implementation

On March 14 2016, the Women’s Intercultural Network (WIN), The Leadership Conference Education Fund, and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights hosted a panel discussion called “From the Global to the Local: CEDAW Activism in the United States.” Over 100 people attended.

The panel discussion brought together passionate speakers representing city and state-based CEDAW Coalition representatives from Los Angeles, Louisville, Cincinnati, and Oregon. Throughout the talk, topics ranged from methods of ending discrimination against women in the workplace, to ending violence against women in the private sphere, working with local government to develop and understanding of CEDAW and support political action, and acknowledging the importance of utilising an inclusive, gender-sensitive lens when developing and strengthen governmental initiatives and policy.



Just a few of the 100+ women in attendance at "From the Global to the Local: CEDAW Activism in the United States" (Photograph by Kathryn Krueger, PeaceWomen/WILPF)

As the United States is among six other countries, including Iran and Sudan, that have not ratified CEDAW, local cities across the United States have taken the initiative to sign it into action through resolutions and ordinances at the local city level under the umbrella of the Cities for CEDAW Campaign. CEDAW has already made impactful, positive change for women and communities in nations around world, and the coalitions working to bring the convention to the United States through a ground-up approach believe that "CEDAW has the power to create just as much transformative change in this country as well."

5. Outcomes of CSW60: Agreed Conclusions

After two weeks of negotiations, the Commission adopted a number of Agreed Conclusions aimed at strengthening women's empowerment and sustainable development after midnight on the evening of 24 March 2016.

PeaceWomen/WILPF joins our coalition, the Women's Major Group, in expressing concern over the Agreed Conclusions.

After two weeks of negotiations, governments should have used this opportunity to come to agreement on ensuring the Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are implemented through a women's human rights framework so as to implement the (1995) Beijing Platform for Action. However, the Agreed Conclusions' language was weak both on peace as well as on other key feminist issue areas.

The text calls for action to ensure the participation and rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, including for refugee women (para 13, 23 (m, hh)); and affirms the need to engage men and boys to achieve gender equality (22, 23(t).) It also recognises the rights of indigenous women and the contributions of civil society including women human rights defenders and feminist groups, and calls for financing for gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs.

However, issues of peace and conflict were quite weak. Governments also traded off key issues including around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, and failed to move forward progressively on issues of health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the (patriarchal) family. In a climate characterised by reduced financing for the feminist movement, governments also were unable to agree to specific commitments to fund women's rights and feminist organisations.

As governments move forward in implementing Beijing and the SDGs, it will be critical for them to be held accountable to holistic - rather than watered down - commitments on gender equality and peace.

6. Next steps

Although CSW60 is done, WILPF supporters can continue to assist with advocacy efforts in a number of important ways. We urge supporters to ask their governments to take action to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a women's human rights lens and ensure women led civil society's substantive participation in monitoring and implementation moving forward.

This means implementing commitments so as to recognise the impact of arms on gender based violence, such as addressed by the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty and relevant to SDG target on illicit arms (16.4); reaffirming the need for innovative financing including redirecting military spending to gender equitable development, as agreed in Beijing (Area E); and recognising how violent masculinities are part of a broader political economy of war.

It is time to take action to change our story and move from an economy of militarism and war to an economy of gender justice and peace. Join us, and make your voice heard!

7. Useful Links

For further information on issues relating to CSW60 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, you may wish to visit:

PeaceWomen: peacewomen.org

WILPF: WILPF.org

The Official website of the Commission on the Status of Women:
un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women: ngocsw.org

UN Women: unwomen.org

For current updates on Women, Peace and Security, [subscribe to PeaceWomen's monthly E-News](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

8. Appendix: WILPF's 2016 statement to the CSW

We, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), call for feminist foreign and domestic policy that ensures local action on demilitarization and women's human rights for transformative change. We call for a change in priorities that invest in women's human rights, divest from militarism, and safeguard political economies of gender justice and peace rather than economies of inequality and war. To mark our 100th anniversary, in April 2015, we convened over 1,000 peace activists at The Hague to mobilise for "Women's Power to Stop War" and commit to a new peace agenda. The time is now to stigmatise and eliminate militarisation and to create space for women's participation. We will work together to end cycles of social and armed violence from state military violence to non-state violent extremism including all forms of violence against women and girls.

The war economy and creeping militarism are the main obstacles to realising women's human rights and sustainable peace. We live in a world with strong political and economic incentives for violence: men with guns occupy peace tables where women peace builders do not even have access to it; we still invest trillions in arms but spend only pennies for peace. The impact is clear. In the Middle East and North Africa region, women have shown how violence is fuelled by increased militarisation and proliferation of arms and will result in extremism. The influx of weapons, coupled with indiscriminate use of weapons against civilians, has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. In Palestine, women have highlighted how women are disproportionately affected by conflict and aggression in Gaza. Despite women's long-term capacity in peace processes and negotiations, they are absent from attempts to resolve the conflict. This is a recipe that has continued to and will continue to fail.

Violence cannot be addressed without tackling its root causes in militarism and gender inequality. To counter the cycles of violence, atrocities must be prevented before, during, and after armed conflicts, by transforming patriarchal, violent, and discriminatory spaces into equitable, inclusive, safe, just, and nourishing communities. This transformation of spaces requires investing in women's local peace work to ensure human rights and build resilient communities. In Cameroon, women are raising awareness of the links between arms proliferation and gender based violence by building strategic collaborations with media houses to sensitise communities to peace issues, including around issues of refugees and host communities. In Nigeria, women are organizing from the community to the national level to strengthen women's

engagement in peacebuilding, combat gun violence, create early warning mechanisms, build early response structures to cross community interventions; promote non-violence communications and actions; mobilise diverse stakeholders including engaging men and youth; and sustain local peace architectures.

Today, women are grappling with the impact of the rise in violence from both state and non-state actors, while also facing a shrinking civil society space for action. It is critical to promote justice, prevent impunity, and ensure perpetrators of sexual and gender based violence are held accountable, via dedicated and reliable funding for women led civil society who build capacity for political participation and provide holistic services to survivors. In Colombia, women have welcomed the inclusion of transitional justice addressing sexual violence as a crime against humanity and war crime. In Mexico, women have demanded changes in the very idea of justice, to promote not retributive but restorative justice to rebuild and sustain local communities. In India, women have called for the rule of nonviolence through women's front-line leadership. They have called for governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to take action to stop gender based violence and fear as a basis for ensuring democratic governance, women's effective access to security and justice, and peace.

It is time for an integrated approach that promotes human security based on women's experiences rather than militarised state security. Human rights violations in one country must be traced to broader gendered political economies of war. In Spain, women have brought attention to how arms transfers to countries with serious situations of gender-based violence would violate the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and undermine commitments to CEDAW. In Australia and elsewhere, women brought attention to the gap between security and development; WILPF activists have demanded the 2030 sustainable development agenda be implemented from a women's human rights perspective that eliminates exploitation of people and planet, including financing UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans and regulating arms that risk gender based violence.

Women's participation is the foundation for preventing all forms of violence. Research has shown that the larger the gender gap, the more likely a state is to be involved in inter- and intrastate conflict, and to use violence first in a conflict. It has also shown that a strong, autonomous feminist movement is the greatest indicator and predictor of government action to redress violence against women. States with the strongest feminist movements are more likely to have more comprehensive policies regarding violence against women.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom makes the following recommendations to the Commission on the Status of Women and the international community:

- Stop subsidising violence: Reduce military spending and promote full implementation of Critical Area E of the Beijing Platform for Action, which links gender equality and the call for the control of excessive arms expenditure, and of Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, which calls for the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.
- Start investing in peace: Increase funding for feminist movements to prevent all forms of violence and promote peace and freedom for all. Invest in women-led civil society in a long-term manner, including promoting women's political participation, access to justice, and access to legal, health, and psychological services including around issues of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Put women at the table: Demand and provide concrete mechanisms to ensure women's and women led civil society's full and equal participation and rights in all peace 3 negotiations and political processes at every level. Refuse to support any peace negotiations that do not have women's substantive participation and rights integrated into the process.
- Respect, protect, and fulfil women's equal human rights: Ensure effective implementation of all existing mechanisms including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in particular CEDAW General Recommendation 30; address discriminatory social, legal, political, and economic barriers to gender equality and peace within and across borders, including through holding international financial institutions (including the IMF and World Bank) and transnational corporations (including private military companies) accountable for upholding women's human rights.
- Promote an integrated approach to peace and security across the UN system: Implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) from a women's human rights perspective as a tool to achieve sustainable peace. Invest in national strategies and plans including UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans to implement Goal 16 on stable and peaceful societies. Sign, ratify, and implement the ATT, including stopping arms transfers that pose risks of gender-based violence.

- Mainstream the Women, Peace and Security Agenda throughout all UN discussions and policy processes by investing in the work of civilian women and rejecting redirection of resources to militarised responses including on countering violent extremism and terrorism; ensure the funding, mechanisms, and political will to achieve the UN Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security.
- Recruit feminist leadership across the UN system: Ensure that the next Secretary-General will prioritise women’s equal participation and rights through an integrated approach to human security and peace.

Today, it is up to us to decide whether we will continue to live with the broken war system. The alternative is right in front of us: increased, transparent investment in women’s participation, protection, and rights across the conflict spectrum is the only way to uproot the gendered foundations of the war economy – and build a new world of sustainable peace based on gender justice.

With feminist peace activists everywhere, WILPF calls for strengthened alliances among all stakeholders to promote feminist foreign and national policies, ensures local action for women’s human rights and peace across the conflict spectrum, and engage every day to invest in economies of peace and gender justice rather than militarism and war.

Together, in solidarity around the world, we will raise our voices and mobilise for sustainable and just peace.

The time is now.