

**Intervention on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
to the
Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) Civil Society Consultation
with WPHF Global Advocate Kristin Bell**

by

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In 1915, 1,200 women from around the world met in the Hague to identify and prevent root causes of war. They founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which is now the longest standing women's peace organisation.

Last month, WILPF activists gathered in Ghana for our 32nd Congress and Feminist Peace Movement in Africa Forum. Today, there are over 10,000 WILPF activists in 39 countries working for feminist peace through disarmament and women's rights.

Women continue to lead the way in mobilising for peace, freedom, and gender justice around the world:

- In the Koreas, women crossed the demilitarised zone in 2015 demanding an end to the over 65-year war. Today, their vision of a peace agreement with women at the table is now recognised as possible, and women are continuing to lead the way.
- In Colombia, women demanded peace that addresses violence against women including due to proliferation of weapons. The 2016 peace agreement included over 100 gender provisions, including zero tolerance on sexual and gender based violence.
- In Nigeria, women are demanding not just reaction but prevention of electoral violence, and are building networks and gendered early warning systems for peace.
- And in places like Syria, women continue to initiate grassroots peacebuilding despite destruction, devastation, and horror.

Women dream "impossible" dreams every day. And everyday, they step up to make these dreams happen.

Women are audacious in their hope, and determined in their leadership. They persist, despite the gas-lighting, undermining, attacks and intimidation that they face every day.

In the US, you can see women's leadership by looking at #BlackLivesMatter, #Occupy, or Parkland students on gun control. Around the world, women are taking the lead to dream bigger dreams and demand action, on peace and security, human rights, development, disarmament, environment, and justice.

Although people often think of peace as an issue that is about other people "out there", WPS advocates have noted that today no country is a country free from conflict, because violence against women exists everywhere. The calls to address militarisation of the police and protect black lives in the US are mirrored by calls to prevent the fire hose of weapons and support women's meaningful participation for peace from Libya, to Afghanistan, to Colombia, to Cameroon.

Peace and security that work for women requires flipping traditional approaches to security on its head. Women have brought attention to how sending in men with guns to divide up power is a failed approach.

Military responses exacerbate sexual and gender based violence and undermine opportunities for peace. Peace and security that works for women requires a different way. It requires addressing violence from the home to the world. It requires not just promoting band-aid solutions, but tackling root causes of violence. It requires supporting local leadership on nonviolence and justice – especially by women – to rebuild communities for sustainable peace.

As an ambassador and ally of the feminist peace movement, we invite you to partner with us, and use your position to:

1. Amplify the voices of grassroots women peace leaders around the world and bring attention to women's leadership on peace and gender justice
2. Demand peace and security that works for women by disarming security and #MovingTheMoney from war to women's participation, livelihoods, rights, and justice
3. Raise awareness of how our struggles are bound up together, and act in feminist solidarity to lift up the voices of diverse women across different struggles for social justice.

Thank you for your solidarity and commitment to the feminist peace movement.

We are stronger together, and each of us has a role to play.

We look forward to working with you to strengthen attention and action to peace that works for women and all people.