



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
**PEACE & FREEDOM**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

**Permanent Mission of Switzerland  
to the United Nations**

## **Strengthening Women's Meaningful Participation in Political Movements and Electoral Processes**

**3:15-5:00 PM Wednesday 24 October 2018**

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

633 3rd Ave, New York, NY 10017

Women are working in informal and formal spaces, including in political movements as civil society activists, political candidates and leaders, and peace negotiators and mediators, to mobilise for a world free from discrimination, with human justice and human rights for women and all people. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda calls on the UN Security Council, UN agencies and Member States to strengthen women's participation, protection and rights across the conflict spectrum, including by strengthening gender analysis and prevention, addressing structural barriers, and promoting accountability (e.g., UNSCR 1325: OP3; UNSCR 1889: OP14; UNSCR 2122: OP1; UNSCR2242: OP1). According to the 2015 Global Study on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, women's participation in formal peace processes also leads to a 35% increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years.

Elections provide a strategic opportunity for leveraging the work of women's political movements to strengthen women's meaningful participation for peace. They provide a focal point for women civil society to build relationships with local authorities to prevent violence, for mobilising women as voters and political candidates, for building partnerships with men to build nonviolent action for peace and security, and for building momentum to strengthen action to promote democratic participation and address root causes of conflict.

In Cameroon, women civil society who led creation of the 2017 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) led mobilisation to address electoral violence through the Women's Situation Room in the 8 October 2018 elections in Cameroon. In Colombia, the women's movement who was instrumental in including for the first time ever, a gender perspective into Colombia's 2016 peace agreement, with over 100 gender provisions in the final text, were successful in achieving gender parity in the composition of

the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and the Truth Commission (CEV) , but face challenges to peace implementation and security of women human rights defenders after the 2018 presidential elections. In Afghanistan, women civil society are bringing together women as peacemakers, including in preparation for the April 20, 2019 presidential elections. In Syria, despite the humanitarian catastrophe, the Syrian Women's Political Movement is working to provide a foundation for a post-conflict phase that will support a democratic and pluralistic state based on principles of equal citizenship for all citizens, women's equal rights, and a gender sensitive constitution that addresses political, legal, economic, social and cultural nondiscrimination.

Holistic action on women's meaningful participation requires strengthening women's participation and supporting a women's human rights agenda in all spheres. However, efforts to support women civil society participation are too often disconnected from women's political participation and women's participation in peace processes. Effective action requires addressing structural barriers and root causes of discrimination and violence that prevent women's participation and rights at all levels. It also requires linking up and synergising action in both formal and informal spaces for gender equality, nonviolence, and justice.

This panel discussion will provide a forum to exchange locally-driven experiences and good practices on strengthening synergies to better support interlinked action on women's meaningful participation for peace in informal and formal spaces around elections processes, as well as identify multi-level challenges and barriers that continue to prevent women's participation across different sectors. Bringing together women peace leaders with experience in Afghanistan, Colombia, Cameroon and Syria, participants will share recommendations for what the UN Security Council, UN Agencies and Member States can do to realise their WPS obligations and mobilise key stakeholders to strengthen coordinated action on women's meaningful participation to address structural obstacles and root causes of conflict and violence.

#### Questions for participants:

- How are women engaging around elections to mobilise action to address root causes of violence? What are women's contributions as civil society activists, voters, political candidates, and participants in peace processes? (Cameroon, Colombia)
- What do you consider to be the main obstacles that limit women's meaningful participation and leadership in your country context, and how does this impact women's participation in formal and informal spaces for conflict prevention and peace building? (Afghanistan, Colombia)
- What obstacles and opportunities exist to link up action that supports women's participation in formal and informal processes? What is needed to ensure that the support for women's participation is meaningful -- that it ensuring gender perspective and a women's rights agenda with impact? (Cameroon, Syria)
- What is being done to build alternative leadership models for peace based on women and men's equal partnership and action on nonviolence and gender equality? (Afghanistan, Syria)

- How can the Security Council, Member States, donors, UN actors, INGOs, and international civil society, strengthen practical support and remove obstacles to women's meaningful participation in formal and informal processes? What needs to be done to promote accountability? (All)

Panel:

*Welcome:* Dominique Favre, Deputy Permanent Ambassador, Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

*Introduction:* Abigail Ruane, WILPF Women, Peace and Security Programme Director

*Panelists:*

- Sylvie Ndongmo, President of WILPF Cameroon and coordinator of Women Situation Room Cameroon
- Katherine Ronderos, President of WILPF Colombia (LIMPAL) and member of the National Summit of Women and Peace (Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz)
- Tanya Henderson, Founder of Mina's List
- Mariam Jalabi, Co-founder of the Syrian Women's Political Movement

Format of the Event

This side event will be an expert level discussion and open meeting aimed at diplomats, UN and civil society, hosted by the Swiss Mission to the United Nations in New York at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The Swiss Deputy Permanent Ambassador will welcome participants and then WILPF will introduce the discussion. WILPF will then invite participants to respond to questions and facilitate an interactive dialogue. The session will then be opened up for questions from the audience.