



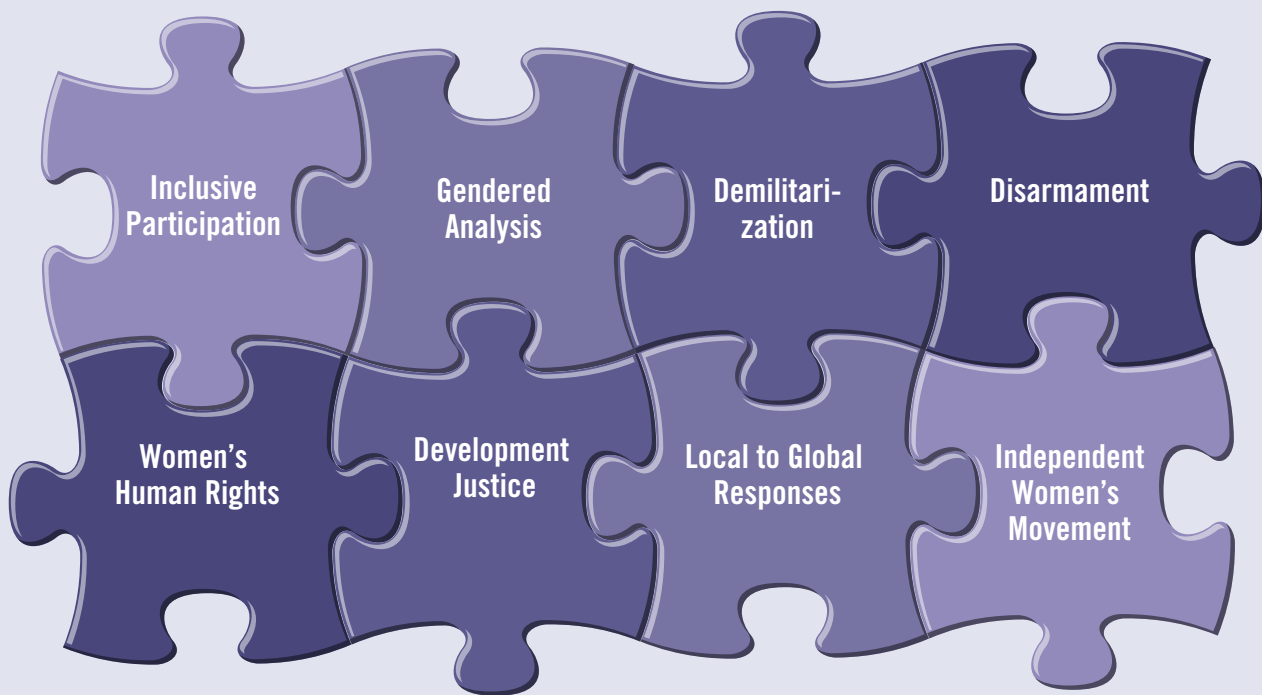
# PIECES OF PEACE

Peace through Gendered Conflict Prevention



**PeaceWomen**

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



## THE PIECES OF PEACE: PEACE THROUGH GENDERED CONFLICT PREVENTION

This publication examines what is required to realize more effective gendered conflict prevention by focusing on eight key interlinked components: inclusive participation; gendered analysis; demilitarization; disarmament; women's human rights; environmental sustainability and development justice; local to global responses; and an independent women's movement.



# PeaceWomen

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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**PEACEWOMEN** is a program of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the longest-standing women's peace organization in the world. PeaceWomen was founded in 2000 to strengthen women's rights and participation in international peace and security efforts. PeaceWomen monitors, informs, and advocates for women's' rights and participation in conflict situations and promotes gender analysis in conflict prevention. Based in the New York Office of WILPF, PeaceWomen facilitates monitoring of the United Nations system, with a particular focus on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The PeaceWomen team is very grateful to all the wonderful WILPF peace leaders and experts for their invaluable contribution and comments on this publication.

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This brief outlines eight pieces of the conflict prevention puzzle, which are critical for effective and gendered conflict prevention:

- 1 Inclusive Participation**
- 2 Gendered Analysis**
- 3 Demilitarization**
- 4 Disarmament**
- 5 Women's Human Rights**
- 6 Environmental Sustainability and Development Justice**
- 7 Local to Global Responses**
- 8 An Independent Women's Movement**

**WHAT?** War is gendered; so too is peace and conflict prevention. Gendered conflict prevention means stopping what fuels violence by addressing gender constructions, power, and politics. Structural violence of inequality, exclusion, oppression, and exploitation causes a continuum of violence. The causes of conflict are deeply rooted in our social, economic, and political systems. Gendered conflict prevention involves incorporating women's different perceptions and experiences about the context and dynamics of the conflict, and recognizing their significant role as major actors in conflict prevention. It entails an analysis of these causes by, for example, understanding whether women have ownership or access over power and resources. Implementing the conflict prevention pillar of the Women, Peace and Security agenda has transformative potential to stop war and violence.

**WHY?** We live in a world that glorifies and invests in war. Yet, the war system does not protect anyone from violence. Instead, it makes violence worse. Preparing for, engaging in, and dealing with the aftermath of war is extremely costly and diverts critical resources from achieving gender justice and peace. Conflict prevention is needed to change the system and industry of war and to reinvest in real, lasting peace. The international community must stop taking a myopic approach that only focuses on symptoms of conflict and should move instead towards an integrated approach that addresses the gendered root causes of conflict for gender justice and sustainable peace.

**WHERE?** Our world is facing unprecedented conflicts and cultures of violence; we are living through a period of constant instability. When taking into consideration both internal and external engagements, only 11 countries in the world are currently not linked to conflict in some way.<sup>1</sup> There is no country where women are safe from violence. Gendered conflict prevention work is therefore required everywhere, across a spectrum of situations and using a variety of tools.

**WHEN?** No longer should we wait until we are on the brink of a calamitous situation before we address the root causes of violence. Preventing conflict saves lives. And we must begin immediately.

**WHO?** We are all responsible for gendered conflict prevention. From individuals, to community groups to international society - we all must play our part. At the international level, actors have specific and mandated responsibilities including for the United Nations Security Council, Member States, the United Nations (UN), and Civil Society.

**HOW?** Divisions among peace, security, disarmament, gender, and human rights entail a breakdown of effective conflict prevention. We must consistently apply feminist curiosity and use diverse tools to create a just and truly peaceful world for all.



Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

## 1 INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Preventing conflict requires full and equal participation of women at all levels. However, women are systematically excluded from meaningfully participating in conflict prevention, peace, and security. Participation of women-led civil society can challenge the power dynamics and causes of conflict, which are defined through patriarchal and militarized structures, and can, ensure more effective and comprehensive responses to conflict.

Participation of women at all levels, from peace processes to electoral processes, is critical - as both candidates and voters; from UN programming to the broader socio-political sphere; and from conflict prevention to post-conflict recovery. Participation in the post-conflict reconstruction process can be the most critical indicator of long-term peace and aid in the prevention of relapse into violence. According to some estimates, participation of local women in conflict zones can increase the probability of violence ending within a year by 24 percent.<sup>2</sup>



### IN FOCUS: Colombia: Promoting Conflict Prevention through Inclusive Peace Processes

In Colombia, inclusive processes ensuring women's participation at the peace table and realization of women's human rights in peace agreements have been a critical demand following the decades-long conflict between the Colombian Government and Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) such as Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).

The inception of peace negotiations between the Government and the FARC in 2010 had an all-male government delegation, however, women peace leaders succeeded in changing this over time. In 2013, WILPF Colombia advocated for the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Review of Colombia to fast track the inclusion of women in peace processes. These recommendations were supported, resulting in the appointment of two wo-



men in the Government delegation conducting peace talks with the FARC and later, the establishment of a Sub-Committee on the negotiations on Gender in 2014. Despite these gains, women civil society still does not have formal space in negotiations.

It is critical to continue to strengthen women's participation as well as the engagement of women's civil society groups in formal peace negotiation processes.<sup>3</sup> It is equally important to integrate women's participation and human rights in the implementation of these agreements in communities throughout Colombia.

Rosa Emilia Salamanca of Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social e Económica, reminds us of women's role in the local application of peace and conflict prevention in Colombia, stating that, "Women...have taught me that sustainable peace is only sustainable insofar as it is just, insofar as it respects the dignity of all...Women can be successful in peace because they support societies during the conflict ... they support society in the worse scenarios you can imagine."

## CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

- 1)** Full inclusion of women as negotiators, experts, and stakeholders in peace processes as well as the incorporation of peace agreements that include women's human rights in substance
- 2)** Inclusive participation, local planning, and implementation of relevant processes through engagement, outreach, and awareness-raising
- 3)** Expansion of national dialogue through parliamentary debates on Women, Peace and Security
- 4)** Full development and implementation of Local, National, and Regional Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 that allow commitments to become accomplishments
- 5)** Inclusion of formidable political leadership through high-level, independent offices on Women, Peace and Security at the UN and in regional, national, and local government offices

### RESOURCES

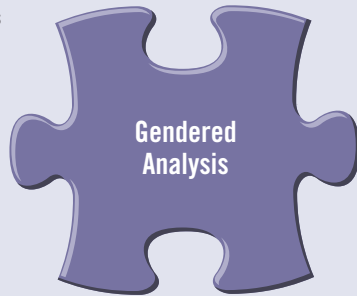
Find advocacy and monitoring tools on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda on:

[www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)

Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

## 2 ROBUST GENDERED ANALYSIS

The absence of a gendered analysis leads to the failure of adequately addressing drivers of conflict, the threatening of the sustainability of peace agreements, and the forcing women to have to fight even harder for representation and justice. A gendered analysis of conflict that draws on women's particular experiences of security and violence can yield a deeper and different understanding of the causes of conflict.



Militarism, war, and violence reinforce—and are reinforced by—gender inequalities and essentialisms. Social constructions of gender tend to portray women as the “weaker sex,” especially in the context of armed conflict. This perpetuates the notion of women as passive, vulnerable, and in need of protection as well as reinforces the idea that women and children are “innocent” while adult men are not. In addition, it bolsters understandings of men as violent and relatively expendable. It perpetuates violent masculinities, which valorize preparedness to use military action and to wield weapons. Militarism, war, and violence also institutionalize masculine roles of “protecting” others, which reduces the capacity for people to protect themselves while simultaneously devaluing male lives.

Women have important perspectives and information to contribute on patterns of violence, tensions in social relations, and threats to personal, familial, and communal security. They often know how and to who arms flow into communities. Yet, their voices, expertise, and early warnings are often ignored or misunderstood by security policymakers.

The lack of a real gendered analysis is an impediment to preventing conflict, building peace, and ensuring human security. Gender perspectives and the participation of women are critical to preventing cycles of violence.

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### IN FOCUS: Ukraine: Preventing the escalation of conflict through robust gender analysis

In Ukraine, a number of factors are driving and escalating the conflict and consequent instability. Patriotism fever, propaganda, the misuse of terminology, and the absence of independent and objective information are combining dangerously to fuel a divisive narrative of “us versus them.” There is little public space for Ukrainian men and women to adopt a nonviolent position in opposition to war. The reinforcement of gender stereotypes and the prevailing divisive narrative are impacting civil society's ability to tap its potential of being an effective driver for peace in an environment of intensifying conflict and increasing militarization. In addition, the conflict is deprioritizing women's equal participation. If serious attention and focus is not provided immediately to address this, regression of women's rights and the further reinforcement of gender stereotypes are likely, negatively impacting Ukrainian society. Gendered analyses of conflict, which take into account the different roles and experiences of men and women are indispensable to the achievement of lasting peace.

In engagement relative to Ukraine, there has been an absence of a gendered analysis of the causes of the conflict and the response strategies. However, WILPF is working to shift focus from a male-dominated narrative of militarism, to a gender sensitive account in order to address and effectively redress the root causes of the conflict. WILPF consulted Ukrainian civil society as well as analyzed and documented information on the current political and security landscape. The 2014 WILPF Report, “Voices from Ukraine: civil society as a driver for peace,” is part of WILPF's gender assessment and engagement. The assessment provides an analysis of the root causes of the conflict and their gender dimensions in order to identify risks, as well as entry points for participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. WILPF is using this gendered conflict analysis with all key actors to push for more effective responses to the conflict in Ukraine.

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# CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

- 1) Inclusion of a robust gendered analysis and assessments of conflict situations
- 2) Creation of gendered indicators to violence
- 3) Shift from traditional gender roles that construct women as unequal toward substantive equality in media, education, policy, and action
- 4) Improvement of the capacity of state and non-state actors to engage with women and women-led civil society including through mechanisms to ensure women's inclusion
- 5) Promotion of gender training as standard operating procedures

## RESOURCES

Find advocacy and monitoring tools on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda on: [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)



Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

## DEMILITARIZATION 3

Why is the world so militarized? Whose priorities does this reflect? You get what you pay for! With annual military spending at USD1.7 trillion, the world is investing in an economy of war and violence rather than an economy of gender justice and peace.

Demilitarization is essential to prevent conflict and to stop the flow of arms in order to reallocate resources to peace and development. Even though militarism and arms have perpetuated ongoing cycles of war and violence, both states and non-state actors continue to invest in this failed approach to security. This narrow way of thinking ignores the humanitarian impact of the use, production, and sales of weapons on human rights and gender equality before, during, and after violence, including through domestic violence.

Militarism reinforces established gender hierarchies and enables the exclusion of women from authoritative socio-political roles. It further removes attention from the role of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in perpetuating violence before and/or after the conflict. Militarism, therefore, shapes the thinking surrounding disarmament, often trivializing perspectives and initiatives that attempt to peacefully defuse conflict. Furthermore, the linking of masculinity with violence glorifies war as an expression of masculine power, making it more difficult for political leaders to avoid military action, cut military expenditure, and/or engage in disarmament.<sup>4</sup>

**IN FOCUS: Middle East North Africa (MENA): Preventing State and Non-State Violence through Demilitarization**

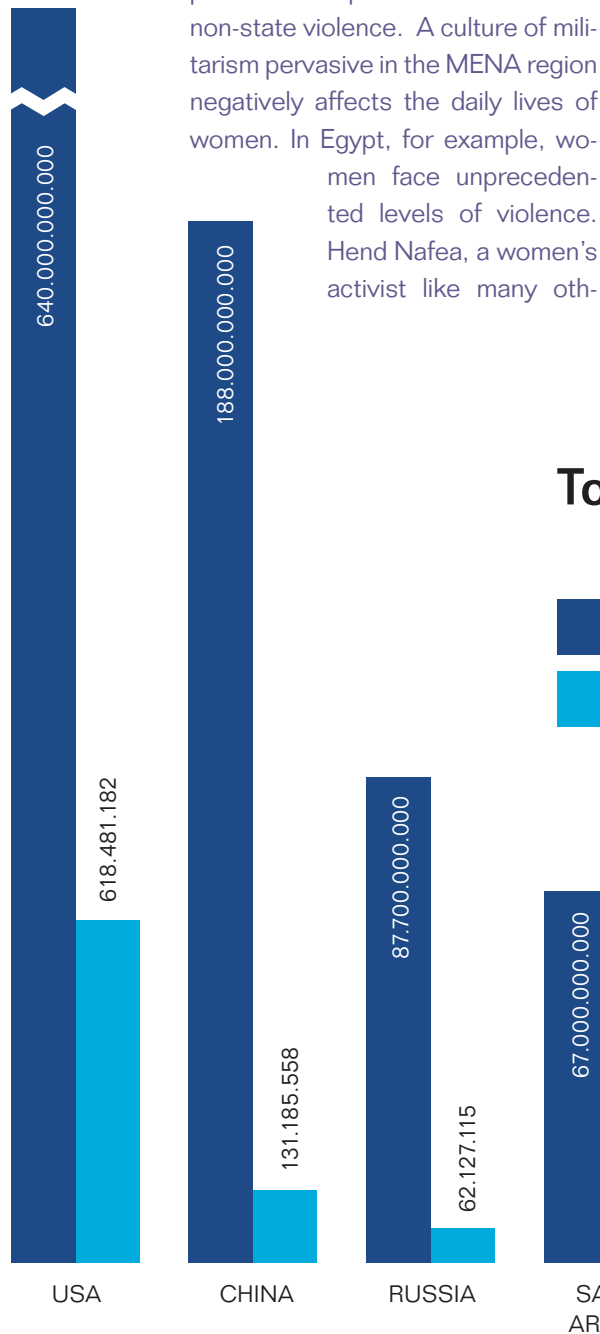
In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, taking action towards demilitarization and the reduction of arms proliferation in order to invest in peace, women’s participation, and human rights is critical to the promotion of peace and the combatting of violence perpetrated by both state and non-state actors.

Women peace leaders from Iraq to Tunisia to Yemen and Syria have drawn attention to how militarism promotes a spectrum of state and non-state violence. A culture of militarism pervasive in the MENA region negatively affects the daily lives of women. In Egypt, for example, women face unprecedented levels of violence. Hend Nafea, a women’s activist like many oth-

ers, experienced this military violence when she was beaten and tortured by military personnel. She was recently sentenced to life imprisonment in a widely criticized verdict.<sup>5</sup> Hend exemplifies the situation of thousands of women in Egypt and across the region who face extreme sexual and gender-based violence, due in part to the absence of accountability brought about by deeply entrenched military control.

WILPF maintains that such violence is directly aimed at preventing women from exercising their right to peaceful participation in all matters of governance, especially in periods of increasing political turbulence. It weakens the rule of law and further undermines the possibility of achieving a legitimate democracy with respect for human rights.

However, women are continuing to take action in order to promote democratic peace by taking steps to reconcile communities. “We are not only victims,” one leader declared, “we are active participants in our nation’s history.”



**Top 10 military spenders**  
UN Secretariat - SIPRI, 2012

■ Spending USD  
■ Contribution to UN regular Budget (USD)

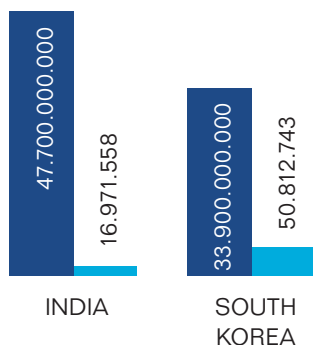


# CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

- 1) Transition in thinking, attitudes, and behavior from militarism and industry of war to a culture of peace and gender justice
- 2) Reduction of military spending and increased investment of resources in peaceful institutions and initiatives, including disarmament measures
- 3) Integration of a gendered perspective to foreign and internal policies and institutions
- 4) Inclusion of media narratives that recognize actions of non-violent citizen defenders rather than fueling archaic and inaccurate myths of heroic warriors saving feminized victims

## RESOURCES

Find advocacy and monitoring tools at: [reachingcriticalwill.org](http://reachingcriticalwill.org)



Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

## DISARMAMENT

# 4

Armed violence is not specific to one country or continent: it is a global risk. The global arms trade is an international business based on profits through the proliferation of weapons, which has specific gender dimensions that are often ignored. Arms and weapons have direct links to discrimination and gender-based violence. Emboldened by weapons, power, and status, both state and non-state parties often perpetrate gender-based violence with impunity, disproportionately affecting women. Disarmament is critical to preventing violence and consolidating peace, security, and gender equality.



An important policy development towards bridging the silos of disarmament and gender happened with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2013. WILPF succeeded, with partners, in securing a legally binding provision in the ATT to help prevent armed gender-based violence. This historic provision requires exporting states to cease the transfer of weapons, if there is a risk that they could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, including gender-based violence.

### Gender and drones

There are some indications that the United States uses maleness as a signifier of militancy when it is targeting or analyzing armed drone strikes. The blanket categorization of adult men as militants erodes the protection that civilians should be afforded in armed conflict and violates many human rights. Targeting 'militants' also constitutes a form of gender-based violence that has broader implications in the reinforcement of gender essentialisms and problematic associations of masculinity with violence. It also particularly impacts women and women's human rights. In addition, it undermines accurate casualty recording, which is a crucial basis for military, legal, and political analysis of attacks.

**READ MORE:** "Sex and drone strikes: gender and identity in targeting and casualty analysis", available at: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

## Gender and explosive weapons

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas not only has devastating direct impacts on civilians in general, but can also affect men, women, and others differently. Damage to infrastructure, access to services, and the risks of displacement caused by the bombing and shelling of towns and cities can have gendered impacts. For example, women's health is disproportionately affected when hospitals are bombed, and access to services for sexual and reproductive health and rights are curtailed. Assessing these impacts can help improve needs assessment efforts, ensure that all people affected by the crisis are taken into equal consideration, and allow for more appropriate and effective response and prevention measures.

**READ MORE:** "Women and Explosive Weapons", available at: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

## Gender and nuclear weapons

Among other things, nuclear weapons have been treated as a symbol of masculine strength (nuclear-armed states are sometimes referred to as the "big boys.")<sup>6</sup> When governments act as though a nuclear arsenal can guarantee their power and security, they create a context in which nuclear weapons become the ultimate symbol of state security and power. This has negative implications for both proliferation and disarmament. In addition, the detonation of nuclear weapons can have differential impacts on the bodies of women, men, and others, especially in relation to radiation and reproduction.

**READ MORE:** "Unspeakable suffering: the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons", available at [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

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## IN FOCUS: How arms transfers can violate human rights and international humanitarian law

Arms sellers, exporters, and transporters continue to sell and profit from weapons that violate human rights and international humanitarian law while directly impeding conflict prevention.

In fact, six countries export over 75 percent of the



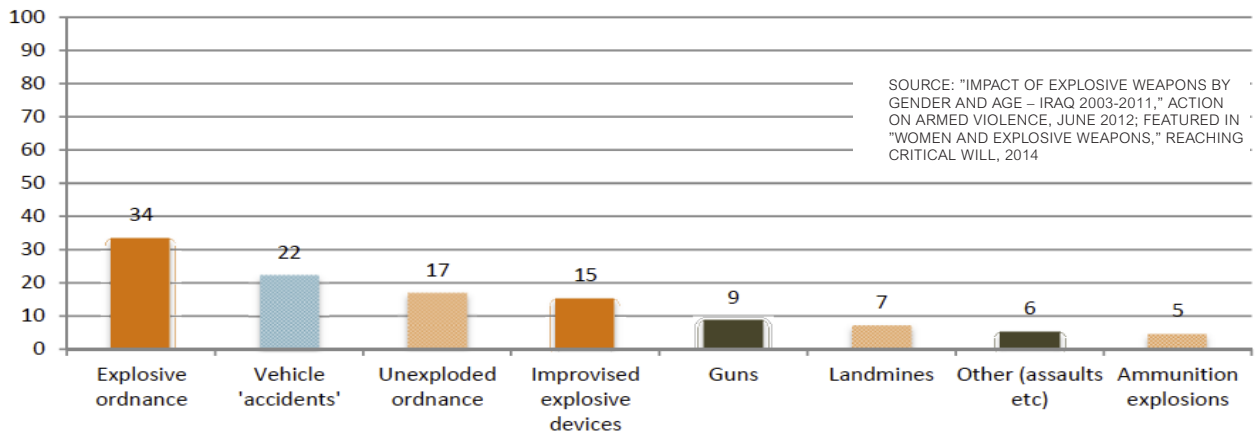
world's weapons: US, Russia, Germany, China, France, and the United Kingdom (UK). All of these countries are signatories to the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. The UK Government's 2010 Human Rights Annual Report identified 26 "countries of concern;" yet that same year, the UK approved arms export licenses to 16 of these countries, including Israel, Libya, Pakistan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. In 2013, the UK parliamentary Committees on Arms Export Controls found that over 3,000 export licenses for arms and military equipment, worth more than GBP12 billion, had been approved for 27 states identified by the UK government's 2012 Annual Report as "countries of concern," including Saudi Arabia, China, and Zimbabwe.

For example, Israel's 2014 offensive in Gaza, which included the use of explosive weapons, violated human rights and international humanitarian law. When Israel was bombing and shelling Gaza, the United Kingdom (UK) had over 300 extant arms exports licenses to Israel, worth approximately GBP7.8 billion. These contracts include bombs, torpedoes, rockets, missiles, other explosive devices, charges, and related equipment and components. The UK refused to impose an arms embargo on Israel even during its bombardment of Gaza. The shelling and bombing of Gaza by Israel was the major cause of direct and indirect civilian harm. The violence has gendered consequences, impacting women both significantly and differently than men, including through reduced space for political participation and increased risk of survival sex, trafficking, and other sexual and gender based violence. The bombardment nearly destroyed Gaza's only power plant, in addition to houses, hos-



PHOTO: UN PHOTO

**% killed and injured were female**



SOURCE: "IMPACT OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS BY GENDER AND AGE - IRAQ 2003-2011," ACTION ON ARMED VIOLENCE, JUNE 2012; FEATURED IN "WOMEN AND EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS," REACHING CRITICAL WILL, 2014

**Note:** Orange shading indicates explosive weapons, dark grey shading guns and direct assaults and blue vehicle accidents. The light orange shading indicates that these incidents may have been accidents rather than direct 'attacks'.

pitals, schools, shelters, and other humanitarian sites. The UK government agreed that the shelling of schools is a moral outrage, yet made no changes to its arms deals. By refusing to impose an arms embargo against Israel, the UK is undermining its own stated commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty, which it ratified on 2 April 2014. The UK government, as one of its strongest supporters, should be committed to upholding its letter and spirit.

There have been some examples of gendered conflict prevention and disarmament. Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström, stated, on her first day in office, in 2014 that Sweden would run a feminist foreign policy. Although Sweden is the fourth largest exporter of arms per capita in the world, Wallström has taken concrete action to realize this goal. She later denounced the Saudi authorities for their human rights record - in particular the sentence of 1,000 lashes and the public flogging of liberal Saudi blogger Raif Badawi. Furthermore, Wallström took the next step of moving from words to action. Following concerted outreach and advocacy by WILPF-Sweden demanding Sweden not to engage in far reaching military cooperation with a regime that systematically and brutally violates women's rights, the Swedish government in March 2015 declared it would not continue a heavily criticized military cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia. This was hailed as a feminist victory, with WILPF Secretary General Madeleine Rees stating that, "this is what feminist foreign policy looks like." WILPF demands that more states enact feminist foreign policy through concrete actions for disarmament, gender justice, and peace.

## CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

- 1) Full inclusion of women as negotiators, experts, and stakeholders in peace processes as well as the incorporation of peace agreements that include women's human rights in substance
- 2) Inclusive participation, local planning, and implementation of relevant processes through engagement, outreach, and awareness-raising
- 3) Expansion of national dialogue through parliamentary debates on Women, Peace and Security
- 4) Full development and implementation of Local, National, and Regional Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 that allow commitments to become accomplishments
- 5) Inclusion of formidable political leadership through high-level, independent offices on Women, Peace and Security at the UN and in regional, national, and local government offices

### RESOURCES

Find advocacy and monitoring tools at: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

## 5 Gendered Conflict Prevention requires **RESPECT, PROTECTION, AND FULFILLMENT OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

The realization of human rights is integral to the prevention of conflict. States continue to fall short of their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill women's equal human rights before, during, and after conflict. Building capacity for women's socio-economic empowerment and rights remains at the bottom of the list even though it is critical to addressing inequalities and the root causes of conflict. Furthermore, there is a lack of accountability for the violations of women's human rights. Gendered conflict prevention also means addressing the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, which is heightened during conflict by aggravating factors, including the polarization of gender roles, the proliferation of arms, the militarization of society, and the breakdown of law and order. The subsequent long-term and complex impacts of sexual and gender-based violence continue to negatively impact individuals and communities after conflict ends.

Leveraging the Human Rights System has potential to be a more effective tool both for early warning and conflict prevention. This means using, for example, the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process as a conflict prevention tool through reporting and integrating gendered conflict analysis across all country situations. It means ratification of CEDAW without reservations as well as commitment to periodic reporting followed by robust implementation of recommendations with particular and comprehensive focus on general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations.

The transformation of cycles of violence requires a change in priorities. It is essential to invest in a holistic and transformative human rights approach to security based on women's rights and gender equality.

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### **IN FOCUS: Women's Human Rights and Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), investment in women's human rights is critical to overcoming a legacy of violence and promoting durable peace.

For years, the international community has exclusively focused efforts on sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups or the army in the DRC. This approach fails to recognize the responsibility of arms exporting states. A shadow report submitted to the CEDAW committee by WILPF-DRC notes that, "7,000 weapons are flowing into the DRC every hour." According to Annie Matundu-Mbambi of WILPF-DRC, "proliferation of guns in the DRC perpetuates sexual violence, criminality, and insecurity." Such proliferation also undermines women's capability to participate in conflict resolution, elections, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Despite obstacles, Congolese women have successfully advocated for ceasefires, peace agreements, constitutional referendums, and gender equitable development in the DRC, resulting in a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. In 2013, women peace leaders in the DRC successfully advocated for the CEDAW Committee to recommend that DRC ratify and implement the Arms Trade Treaty in order to control the flow of small arms and light weapons throughout the country. Efforts to end the influx of arms while simultaneously building institutional capacity and women's capacity to demand women's socioeconomic rights, political inclusion, and gender equitable service provision for violence survivors must be dramatically expanded for long lasting peace.

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# CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

- 1) Holistic protection and fulfillment of women's equal human rights
- 2) Implementation of gender budgeting and financing to ensure gender equality and women's participation and rights in conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction
- 3) Accountability of international actors to uphold women's human rights, including by ensuring that private military companies, national militaries, international monetary institutions, and transnational corporations uphold women's equal human rights

## RESOURCES

Find advocacy and monitoring tools at [www.wilpfinternational.org](http://www.wilpfinternational.org)

## 6

Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE

Preventing conflict requires investment in a political economy of peace rather than a political economy of war. It requires investing in policy aimed at gender equality, human development, and environmental protection rather than profit and exploitative growth. It requires investment in the building blocks of flourishing livelihoods including gender equitable social safety nets, infrastructure, and education for vibrant, equitable, and peaceable communities.

In conflict-affected communities, women often sustain and manage the family economies. War and conflict devastate the environment while women bare the brunt of this devastation. In many conflict areas, the destruction of infrastructure creates a class of vulnerable refugees that begins to rely on the environment to fulfill their needs.<sup>7</sup> Displaced women face an increased risk of violence and reduced access to resources and opportunities for political participation in situations of conflict.



Environmental degradation and issues of access to resources can fuel, as well as result from, violent conflict. According to the UN Environment Programme, over the last 60 years, at least 40 percent of all internal conflicts have been linked to the exploitation of natural resources, and this link doubles the risk of a conflict relapse in the first five years.<sup>8</sup> As the Security Council has recognized, climate change is seen as a threat-multiplier, which has potential in the long run to "aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security."<sup>9</sup> Since gender inequality is another threat-multiplier, the two in combination can be deadly. It is therefore essential to address women's full and equal participation and



PHOTO: UN PHOTO / TIM MCKULKA

rights around issues of environmental protection and regulation, land rights, and environmental degradation in order to build sustainable capacity for peace.

With 82 percent of the world's poor projected to live in states that are conflict-affected or that have weak governance, policies, or institutions by 2025, it is critical for issues of conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding to be effectively integrated into the next global development agenda. Yet, traditional approaches to development continue to be segregated from efforts for peace and security. The absence of peace was a glaring gap in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the majority of countries furthest from reaching the MDGs have been conflict-affected. Investment in environmental sustainability, human development, and human security based on women's experience is critical to transitioning from exploitation to regeneration and the promotion of gender equality, development, and peace.

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### **IN FOCUS: Women's Human Rights and Peace in India**

In India, investment in women's human rights, especially in socio-economic rights, is critical to promoting durable peace. Rural women have long suffered the negative impacts of globalization, liberalization, and privatization. Indian farmers, especially female farmers, are coerced into giving up their land, then forced to move to urban areas where they join the unskilled work force. This often culminates in a significant decline to their standard of living due to lack of access to education, health, and decent wages. For farmers who remain, the environment becomes polluted and degraded. Farming therefore becomes a greater challenge for rural communities due to flash flooding, erosion, and even drought. These effects on rural communities - especially women who bear much of the burden of work in rural areas - are devastating, taking an unimaginable economic, social, and cultural toll on rural communities.

Indian peace activists have taken action to demand investment in gender equitable social and environmental institutions to strengthen gender equality, development and peace. Some have de-

manded that women be consulted when the state acquires land from farmers and that the exchange should not be considered legal until consent from women is granted. Others have conducted capacity building workshops ranging from human trafficking and women in public life to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDs.

Despite action by women peace leaders, many obstacles remain to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling women's human rights and investing in sustainable peace. It is critical to respond to the concerns of grassroots women human rights defenders on the ground and amp up efforts for gender equitable human development and transformative change.

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## CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE:

- 1) Integration of socio-economic development systems and policies that work for women, men, communities and the environment
- 2) Accountability of both state and non-state actors for women's human rights - including in conflict settings
- 3) Strengthening of a conflict prevention approach that integrates gender equality and peace in the Post-2015 development agenda
- 4) Formidable financing for gender equality in all development planning, including through the reduction of military spending and the redirection of resources to gender-equitable social spending

### RESOURCES

Find advocacy and monitoring tools on sustainable development and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda at:

[www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)

## 7

Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

### EFFECTIVE LOCAL TO GLOBAL COMMUNITY RESPONSES



Gendered conflict prevention requires effective response systems to exist at local, national, regional, and international levels.

Women lead community prevention around the world and have lessons to share. They must also lead the creation of response mechanisms.

Early-warning systems must be designed to communicate with communities likely to be affected by conflict, as well as with decision-makers and relevant actors in order to prevent or minimize impact. These systems are neither designed nor implemented with a gendered lens.

Today, our multilateral UN system is broken when it comes to peace and security. It is full of siloes. It does not take into account or effectively respond to the lived realities of those affected by conflict and violence.

Today's security framework is still based on the medieval narrative that brave warriors can save virtuous souls. This ignores how dependence on "heroes" increases risks. It ignores how militarized state security creates obstacles to enhancing human security. Furthermore, it ignores the critical need to build the capacity for all people in order to achieve real security.

An integrated gendered conflict prevention approach seeks to prevent conflicts by addressing the root causes of war and violence, connecting the dots among issue areas in the multilateral system, and working more effectively for all people. This means there should be no artificial divisions between peace, security, disarmament, development, justice, and human rights. Institutions such as the Security Council, Human Rights Council and International Monetary Fund need to be refit for

this purpose. We must not accept the current disconnected and contradictory efforts that result in violent intervention, economic exploitation, and only limited action for human security and rights. WILPF pioneered and continues to implement this integrated approach in our work by connecting issues of women's human rights, disarmament, development, and security by bridging the gap between local and global actors, as well as by speaking truth to power. We organize and mobilize. We monitor, analyze, and report on the outcomes of these forums and follow up to help ensure effective implementation of decisions and agreements.

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### **IN FOCUS: UN Security Council Accountability on Gendered Conflict Prevention**

The interpretation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda by the Security Council remains too narrow, with an exclusive focus on the protection aspect rather than holistic conflict prevention. This is often reflected in the Security Council's work. For example, from PeaceWomen's monitoring of country-specific resolutions (period 2000-2010) only four percent of those resolutions with language on Women, Peace and Security refer to women's role in conflict prevention, while the majority refers to sexual and gender-based violence.

In 2014, WILPF organized the first official meeting of the United Nations Security Council with Syrian civil society. Three Syrian women leaders shared their experiences of conflict and recommendations for peace in the historic January 2014 high-level closed Arria Formula meeting of the Council. The Syrian women participated to ensure that the highest body of the UN heard the reality of the Syrian crisis, and to secure recommendations were based on a robust gendered analysis. Holding a Security Council meeting with Syrian women raised the issue of women's participation in Syrian peace processes on the global policymaking agenda directly before the official negotiations known as "Geneva II" talks.

In addition to recommendations related to the peace negotiations and the situation on the ground, the

Syrian advocates called for all future outcome documents and related resolutions of the Security Council to include strong language that ensured peace and security through women's rights and gender perspectives in all agreements. A few weeks later the Security Council unanimously adopted the first Humanitarian resolution on Syria (Resolution 2139 (2014) which did in fact include stronger language on women's participation.

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## **CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE**

- 1)** Support – political, technical and financial- for community conflict prevention responses
- 2)** Redesigned international institutions that strengthen coordinated action for gendered conflict prevention
- 3)** An effective integrated approach that responds to and engages women's civil society and gender perspectives
- 4)** Utilization of the UN mechanism in order to collaborate, comprehend, analyze, and respond effectively to realities of women at local and national levels

### **RESOURCES**

Find advocacy and monitoring tools on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda at:

**[www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)**



Gendered Conflict Prevention requires

## 8 AN INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Preventing conflict requires the involvement of strong independent women's movements. Organization and mobilization is critical to meeting future challenges of a more insecure world. A global study in 70 countries found that the mobilization of autonomous feminist movements is imperative for adopting policies that reduce violence against women, including the wealth of nations or the number of women politicians.<sup>10</sup>

**“As women’s organizations, as civil society, we would like to be an active partner and participant in every process making peace. We are not talking about any peace. We are talking about sustainable peace built on justice—and we call that real democratic peace.”**

– Syrian women rights leader, 2014.

Feminist movements, at both local and international levels, have the power to prevent conflict if they are autonomous and have the capacity to organize and advocate. Such movements not only shape and elevate gendered agendas in government institutions, but also cultivate change through the development of new social organizations, networks, and creative public outreach. Feminist peace leaders can leverage these platforms to link the local and the global, and use the multilateral system's tools to prevent conflict and promote peace.

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### IN FOCUS: WILPF – A Century of Women Peace Leaders

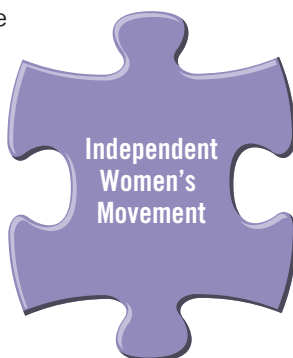
Women have always engaged in war and peace. Our own organizational history tells that story. WILPF was formed in 1915, when over 1,200 women from diverse cultures and nations met at The Hague, the Netherlands. They came together to

protest the World War raging at the time, and to advocate for women's rights to make decisions in matters of peace and security.

Over the last century, WILPF has worked tirelessly to promote peace and gender justice by leveraging international commitments at the UN for local change. In the process, it has helped develop international disarmament and arms control initiatives and instruments, won two Nobel Peace Prizes, and advocated for the launch and implementation of the United Nations (UN) Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Today, we continue to advocate, monitor, evaluate, and build capacity for peace and freedom through disarmament and women's participation rights at the UN and around the world. In 2015,

again women activists and advocates for peace came to a historic WILPF convened gathering “Women's Power to Stop War” movement to re-organize as our world is still facing unprecedented conflicts and cultures of violence and published a manifesto for establishing permanent peace.



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## CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE:

- 1) Stronger independent women's peace movement to end war – Join WILPF!
- 2) Strengthened political, technical, and financial support for women's movements and civil society including the use of dedicated financing mechanisms
- 3) Effective synergy, coordination, and communication within and between the women's movement and other movements and civil society actors

### RESOURCES

Join a global women's peace movement! Find out more at: [www.wilpfinternational.org](http://www.wilpfinternational.org)

# IMPLEMENTATION OF CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL TOOLS

- ◆ The **Women, Peace, and Security Agenda** of the UN Security Council (Resolution 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, and 2122) is the international legal framework calling on states to strengthen women's participation, protection, and rights in conflict prevention, peace process, and through post-conflict reconstruction processes.
- ◆ The **Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** and human rights frameworks including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and covenants on civil political and economic, social, and cultural rights are the main international legal frameworks outlining state responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill women's equal participation and human rights, including in conflict settings.
- ◆ The **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Arms Trade Treaty** are three of the key instruments calling on states to regulate arms or to take action on disarmament. The UN General Assembly's First Committee, Disarmament Commission, and Conference on Disarmament are some of the main forums that discuss and take action on disarmament. A new series of discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, held outside of UN auspices, is an exciting new initiative to address the risks of catastrophic harm and global injustice of nuclear weapons.
- ◆ The **Beijing Platform for Action** is a global policy framework translating women's human rights into international policy frameworks. It includes critical areas of concern including women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, and the human rights of women.
- ◆ The **Millennium Development Goals** were key to the international framework guiding international development priorities for 2000-2015; The Sustainable Development Goals to be launched in September 2015, and the sustainable development processes including the 2002-2012 Rio conferences, are key to the international framework to guide international development priorities beyond 2015.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace 2014 Global Peace Index: [www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/global-peace-index](http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/global-peace-index)

<sup>2</sup> Laurel Stone (2014), Can Women Make the World More Peaceful?, The Guardian, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/aug/11/women-conflict-peace-society>

<sup>3</sup> Thania Paffenholz (2014), Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion–Exclusion Dichotomy, *Negotiation Journal*, 30(1): 69-91

<sup>4</sup> Reaching Critical Will: Sex and Drone Strikes (2014), available at: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/9367-sex-and-drone-strikes-gender-and-identity-in-targeting-and-casualty-analysis](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/9367-sex-and-drone-strikes-gender-and-identity-in-targeting-and-casualty-analysis)

<sup>5</sup> Nadine Marroushi (2014), The struggles – and hopes – of Hend Nafea, *Middle East Eye*, available at: [www.middleeasteye.net/columns/struggles-and-hopes-hind-nafia-1025966697](http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/struggles-and-hopes-hind-nafia-1025966697)

<sup>6</sup> Jennifer Nordstrom and Felicity Hill (2007), A Gender Perspective, pp.165-168 in *Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security? US Weapons of Terror, The Global Proliferation Crisis, and Paths to Peace*, Burroughs et al. available at: <http://wmdreport.org/ndcs/online/NuclearDisorderPart-4Section2.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Karl Mathiesen (2014), What's the Environmental Impact of Modern War?, The Guardian, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/nov/06/whats-the-environmental-impact-of-modern-war>

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Environmental Programme (2009), From conflict to peacebuilding The role of natural resources and the environment, available at: [http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/pcdmb\\_policy\\_01.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/pcdmb_policy_01.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Security Council Presidential Statement on Climate Change (PRST 2011/15), 20 July 2011, available at: [www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/PRST/2011/15](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/PRST/2011/15)

<sup>10</sup> Mala Htun and Laurel Weldon (2012). The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005, *American Political Science Review*, 106(3): 548-569.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations.

Since our establishment in 1915, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means and promoting political, economic and social justice for all.

Our approach is always non-violent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualize and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

PeaceWomen is a program of WILPF working to promote a progressive gender-perspective in preventing conflict and creating peace through women's full and equal participation and bridging global and local efforts to implement a holistic and transformative Women, Peace and Security Agenda.



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