

# #DoWomensVoicesMatter to counter violent extremism?



Abigail Disney and Gini Reticker, Peace is Loud

*The army...took off my veil and dragged me by the hair, and took off my clothes in front of everyone. They dragged me in the street to the [police station]. There was a torture chamber there prepared to torture the girls.*

-- Hend Nafea, sentenced to life in prison for protesting the military regime in Egypt.

**In February of 2015, the Obama Administration convened its first-ever international summit on countering violent extremism, but the inclusion of women like Hend fell far short.** In fact, only the last session on the last day of the summit listed “women” as a headline topic for discussion.

Women are at the forefront of the fight against violent extremism and oppressive regimes, and leaving them out of the peacebuilding process is a recipe for failure. According to a UN study, **peacebuilding efforts that include groups beyond the military and government are 64% less likely to fail** and UN Resolution 1325 affirms the critical importance of women in peace negotiations.

Women have been singled out for harsh treatment by oppressive regimes and extremist groups in the Middle East and beyond, and they have a crucial role to play in determining the future of their societies. **But the administration is leaving women’s voices out of the conversation.**

In September 2015, the summit on violent extremism will reconvene. **Ask the Obama Administration to include a meeting of women peacebuilders with high-level US defense and national security officials in the summit's agenda.**

Women like those seen in the film series [\*The Trials of Spring\*](#) are on the front lines of global peacebuilding. Sign the petition to ask the Obama Administration #DoWomensVoicesMatter.

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*[The Trials of Spring](#) is an initiative that aims to elevate the stories of the women who were on the front lines of the uprisings that swept the Arab world in 2011. The project includes six short films profiling women from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, a feature documentary focused on Egypt, and an outreach campaign that will bring these stories to stakeholders, educators and grassroots organizations around the world, and was created by Oscar-nominated Gini Reticker and Abigail Disney.*

LETTER TO

**President** Barack Obama

**United States Secretary of State** John Kerry

Women are at the forefront of the fight against violent extremism and oppressive regimes around the world. But despite their critical leadership role in building global peace, women are being left out of the global conversation.

In February of 2015, the Obama Administration convened its first-ever international summit on violent extremism, but the inclusion of women like Hend, Belquis, and Salwa fell far short of what is needed.

Leaving women out of peacebuilding efforts is a recipe for failure. In fact, peacebuilding efforts that include groups beyond the military and government are 64% less likely to fail.

When the summit reconvenes in September, I ask that you host a meeting of women

peacebuilders and high-level US foreign defense and national security officials and discuss their deep and ongoing inclusion and leadership of this work.