



WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Background to the Discussions

Discussions at the Tunis Forum focused on what is a feminist peace, how can local organisations claim the space to contribute to ensuring women are involved in peace-building and peace-creating, and how can women be more integrated into post-conflict reconstruction. There was a recognition of the need to claim women's space at the table in both formal and informal decision-making processes and across the conflict cycle, to ensure that women, including those who are rarely heard, are meaningfully included and engaged.

The importance of integrating work in the context of CEDAW and other human right instruments into the Women, Peace and Security agenda and for women's groups to avoid working in silos, was raised. Women not only need to strengthen relationships amongst each other but also build key strategic alliances with different sectors to ensure a gender paradigm shift. There was also some discussion about the links between demilitarization and disarmament and the implementation of a feminist peace. Some of the questions posed were: How is militarization connected to masculinities and negative gender norms? How do we ensure the protection of women peacemakers and activists through laws and accountability mechanisms? And how can we work to facilitate financial resources reaching women's organisations?

RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- Adopt a comprehensive, gendered approach that centres women's participation and analysis across different fields such as governance, protection, and humanitarian response and throughout all phases of conflict.
- Claim space at the table by presenting strategic solutions to problems comprising an intersectional perspective that includes taking account of climate crisis as a cause of armed conflict.
- Link accountability for women, peace and security to CEDAW to ensure stronger accountability mechanisms, inter alia by making the CEDAW Committee's General recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situation, an integral part of CEDAW official and shadow reporting
- Continuously explore clear linkages/coherence/coordination between SDGs, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and other relevant conventions, and the Security Council's WPS agenda including as expressed in National Action Plans.
- Prioritize disarmament and demilitarization as critical to sustainable peace and call for the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty which prohibits the transfer of arms to conflicts in which women and/or children might be harmed.

Protection should be at the core

- Develop early warning and alert mechanisms to enable women's organizations to report peace and security threats and protection concerns to responsible community, government and international bodies. Work in this area can be improved by continuously collating the impacts of scarcity of resources (including resource-scarcity produced by over-extraction by international corporations), climate violence and warfare. Early warning mechanisms could include research on strategies to recognise disaffection among women leading to potential engagement in violence.
- Protect women human rights defenders and peace makers through national legislation and accountability and response mechanisms, including protection of activists resisting climate violence.
- Ensure protection includes adequate provision of support for post-trauma, healing and mental wellness and issues related to sexual and reproductive rights.
- Ensure that women's economic empowerment is continuously connected to the WPS response, especially for women affected by war (refugees, widows, war disabled and those caring for people with disabilities, orphans, etc.)
- Make gender analysis and planning a pre-requisite to ensure gender-responsive policies and requirements, including gendered allocation and tracking of financial resources.

Feminist and inclusive peace processes

- Turn women's individual work into movements through the creation of intersectional feminist spaces that build alliances to have a common response, engage politically, and support each other, including on emerging issues like climate related violence.
- Involve women in local conflict analysis so that their own words are used to define drivers of conflict.
- Establish a paradigm shift by identifying allies and engaging other sectors like religious leaders, government, community, and the media to build coalitions and networks, whilst ensuring credibility, for example in the case of religious leaders, they should have a track record of: a) advocating for women and girls' rights by way of regular sermons on subject matters such as rights to schooling, self-determination, to reproductive justice, against Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C), child/forced marriage; b) programming against violence against women, using religious language to forbid violence against women.
- Recognise, support and protect bottom-up local and indigenous women activists and feminist peace work at grass-root and community level, and support interlinkages between track I-III, and at local, national, regional and global level.