

**Human Rights Working Group
Washington, United States, October 10-11
Working Group Summary Statement**

Armed conflicts in the Middle East have affected more than 47 million people and resulted in the forced displacement of over 17 million in recent years. Women and girls have been disproportionately affected by armed conflict, emerging as heads of household in displacement; confined in homes by bombs, checkpoints and militias; victimized and targeted by terrorist groups; and deprived of their rights and freedoms. Proponents of some radical ideologies seek to undermine women's human rights. Women have also emerged in many cases as pragmatic leaders who confront challenging situations in areas of the region to advance peace and security, often at great risk to their personal safety. National, regional, and international efforts aimed at increasing women's role and participation in promoting comprehensive regional peace and security must be consistent with the UN Charter, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law, as applicable.

The Warsaw Process Working Group on Human Rights discussed advancing women's ability to participate equally with men in the conduct of public affairs, which they should enjoy free from violence or intimidation, and restoring women's freedom of movement, association and expression, which have been curtailed by armed conflict. To this end, the working group discussed an increased role for women in preventing and sustainably resolving armed conflicts, mitigating the lasting effects of war, and reinforcing peace and security in the region. Delegations also discussed the role state and non-state actors in the region play in contributing to armed conflicts that disproportionately impact the lives and livelihoods of women and children.

Despite positive steps taken in the region, women leaders from the Middle East are underrepresented in power centers where decisions are made about their nations' and communities' futures. At the working group, delegations discussed the barriers to women's meaningful participation, including underrepresentation in political leadership, pervasive gender-based violence, persistent inequality in public and private life, and hard economic and social conditions. The working group emphasized that a country's path from insecurity and armed conflict to peace and development requires the full participation of all members of its society. It further emphasized that promoting half the population's meaningful inclusion and participation across efforts to restore security, promote human rights and democracy, and support economic development is not simply a women's issue, it is a national security issue and vital for human progress, which should be dealt with in full respect for the principles of the UN Charter and in consideration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Working Group on Human Rights aims to support ongoing regional and national efforts to promote the meaningful participation of women in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution and recovery as essential to achieving long-term peace and stability. Evidence indicates women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution advances security interests. Yet peace initiatives are still too often negotiated only between small numbers of men.

In the nearly two decades since UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was issued by the UN Security Council, there have been concerted efforts by women leaders, often with support from the international community, to participate in some aspects of peace processes and lead

grassroots conflict resolution efforts in some of the most complex conflicts. While such efforts are sorely needed, they often fall short of their intended objectives. Too often women participants, whether government officials or civil society experts, are routinely marginalized, disregarded and uninvited to conversations that matter; and when they are present, they are far outnumbered by their male colleagues.

It is our collective responsibility – and in our collective interest – to improve outreach, consultation and inclusion of capable women leaders in decisions that determine their futures. The working group discussed ways of ensuring that women’s participation is both consistent and meaningful, not only from a human rights standpoint but also from a practical one, because when women play an influential role in peace processes, peace agreements are more likely to last.

As such, delegations to the Warsaw Process Working Group on Human Rights discussed how to advance the following actions individually and collectively throughout the region and committed to continuing collaborative efforts in the context of the working group process:

- Concretize the commitment to Women, Peace and Security by encouraging and providing support upon the request of states in drafting, implementing and adequately resourcing National Action Plans (NAPs) in consultation with women civil society leaders and taking into consideration a holistic approach. Those who have not yet taken initial steps are encouraged to work in earnest to finalize their NAP. Member governments with existing NAPs are encouraged to take the critical step of allocating budget resources to help galvanize political will to operationalize existing plans for maximum peace and security outcomes.
- Prioritize exchange of intra-regional technical expertise on good practices while collectively identifying and addressing barriers – logistical, social and institutional – that prevent qualified women from exerting greater presence and influence on formal peace processes.
- Promote the recruitment of and equal opportunities for qualified women in decision-making roles within key security and political institutions related to peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and post-conflict recovery and reconciliation, while identifying the best practices of relevant international and regional arrangements, and actively mitigating societal barriers that entrench institutional patterns of gender inequality.
- Encourage wider outreach and consultation with a range of women-led civil society groups active in conflict-affected areas in the Middle East to proactively build relationships that can yield greater access to peace processes for capable women leaders and elicit technical and qualitative expertise to inform donor and host country policies as they seek to prevent, mitigate and resolve regional conflicts.

The following countries contributed to the working group summary statement:

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Armenia

4. Australia
5. Austria
6. Bahrain
7. Belgium
8. Brazil
9. Bulgaria
10. Croatia
11. Czech Republic
12. Egypt
13. Ethiopia
14. Finland
15. France
16. Germany
17. Greece
18. Iceland
19. Israel
20. Italy
21. Japan
22. Jordan
23. Kuwait
24. Liberia
25. Luxembourg
26. Malta
27. Montenegro
28. Morocco
29. New Zealand
30. North Macedonia
31. Norway
32. Oman
33. Poland
34. Portugal
35. Qatar
36. Romania
37. Saudi Arabia
38. Slovakia
39. Slovenia
40. Spain
41. Sweden
42. The Netherlands
43. Tunisia
44. United Arab Emirates
45. United Kingdom
46. United States
47. Yemen