



Beirut Call for Action

Prioritizing women, peace and security
on the Arab agenda



UNITED NATIONS

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THE GANDHI CENTRAL FOR RESEARCH
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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Introduction

Given the urgent challenges facing women in the Arab region, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University and the Centre for Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in collaboration with the Danish Center for Gender, Equality and Diversity, hosted an international conference to engage international, regional and national stakeholders in strategic dialogue on women, peace and security in the Arab region. The conference was held in Beirut, from 8 to 10 August 2016, on the theme "Towards prioritizing women, peace and security on the Arab agenda". It brought together experts, academics, practitioners, civil society representatives, government officials and United Nations representatives.

Participants discussed Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, subsequent resolutions, CEDAW recommendation No. 30 and other international obligations that collectively form the women, peace and security agenda, in addition to plans that ensure the participation of women in all aspects of peace and security. The conference is part of a continuing regional discussion on women, peace and security that reflects the commitments of partners to move forward on these issues. A detailed summary of conference proceedings will be published on the organizers' websites by October 2016.

In recognition of the causes and long-lasting consequences of conflict, violent extremism and occupation, conference participants acknowledged the need for long-term sustained results for women in the Arab world. Consequently, they issued the Beirut Call for Action, comprising 15 recommendations on prioritizing women, peace and security on the Arab agenda.

Beirut Call for Action

As we continue to strive for gender justice, peace and security, we call on Arab States, the United Nations, the League of Arab States, civil society, policymakers and practitioners to fund, implement and entrench the following 15 recommendations to ensure the inclusion of all women in peace and security initiatives across the Arab region.

Localize the women, peace and security agenda

1. Expand evidence-based research on women, peace and security, focusing on the everyday complex sociopolitical dynamics between

women and men. This should include research on the role of non-State actors and indicators related to early warning systems, with particular emphasis on refugees, displaced populations, minorities, survivors, those at risk of violence and other vulnerable groups.

2. Introduce a new paradigm that promotes a culture of peace and active protection of women from violence, and that tackles issues of violent extremism, radical religious discourse and political repression, including documenting the experiences of women in peace and security, women who engage in peacebuilding processes and women affected by violence.
3. Address knowledge gaps in the role of institutions, including educational, legal, judicial, security and non-State institutions, with regard to their responsibilities in advancing the women, peace and security agenda at the local level, resulting in raising awareness and building the capacity of relevant institutions.
4. Document, publish and disseminate technical material and information briefs on the role of various institutions in advancing the agenda, so as to encourage inclusive national, regional and triangular dialogues among all stakeholders, including United Nations agencies.
5. Support cross-sectoral, grassroots-level activities on women, peace and security across the region, which focus on service delivery and preventing violent extremism, particularly for most vulnerable groups, enable the organization and development of civil society and other informal structures, and ensure collaboration among local government agencies, civil society, women's groups and other stakeholders.

Promote women's activism in peace and war

6. Expand knowledge on militarized masculinities as the dominant paradigm in war, and on the gender divide in the politics of conflict and peacemaking, and raise awareness on how to engage men as allies in women, peace and security issues, and as advocates of gender equality and justice.
7. Provide targeted training and long-term capacity development to strengthen the contributions of institutions and individuals to advance the women, peace and security agenda.
8. Promote legislative and institutional reforms that involve women in decision-making and peace processes, including ratifying and enforcing

international frameworks such as the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court, and removing relevant discriminatory reservations.

9. Recognize the key role of civil society in all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda, strengthen its capacities and protect its right to speak out and contribute to the implementation of the agenda.
10. Promote the design, funding, and implementation of national action plans on women, peace and security, to act as vehicles for coordinating, guiding and reporting on national progress. These action plans should ensure the engagement of women at all levels, especially at leadership and decision-making levels, and reflect their experiences.
11. Engage in capacity development activities that ensure women have an influential role in global policy discourse and in all global and regional discussions on peace and security; and support regional and national public campaigns, networks and coalitions that advocate the role of women in peacebuilding processes and other peace and security initiatives, including through social media.

Institutionalize collaborations on women, peace and security

12. Establish partnerships with security sector institutions, the judiciary, parliaments and civil society organizations working on socioeconomic issues, good governance and public affairs to further develop a new paradigm on women, peace and security.
13. Promote and support multi-stakeholder partnerships to include traditional and non-traditional partners, such as academia, the media, non-State political actors and the private sector, to promote tolerance and peace.
14. Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices and lessons learned among countries of the region and beyond, with a focus on cross-border experience-sharing and coordination. This collaboration should focus on advocacy and engaging young people, and highlight and address the atrocities committed against women in Arab countries.
15. Facilitate cross-sectoral collaborations to ensure the inclusion of women in all peace and security aspects, with a view to strengthening service delivery and social cohesion at the local level, including the creation of permanent coordination structures.

