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## editorial

Wars and peacebuilding are often associated with men, be they soldiers, well-known heads of state, or successful mediators. However, women have always played an important role in conflicts – albeit a much less visible one. The UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security of 2000 recognizes the role of women and girls in the areas of conflict and peacebuilding. It also serves to promote the participation of women in the conflict prevention and peace processes. At the end of 2018, the FDFA launched Switzerland's National Action Plan for the implementation of this resolution.

The authors of this issue will report on how they stand up for gender-sensitive peace policy, the specific needs and roles women have in conflict-ridden regions, and what the Swiss National Action Plan 1325 is all about.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Amélie Lustenberger, editor of KOFF Magazine

focus

# Women, Peace & Security: yesterday, today and tomorrow



Female delegates at the 1915 Women's Peace Conference in The Hague. Picture: Creative Commons.

In the nineteen years since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the role of women and gender within all realms of international peace and security has steadily gained prominence. UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions which comprise the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda have called for the greater protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings; the promotion of women's political participation; the prevention of violence against women through the promotion of women's rights and gender equality; and the mainstreaming of gender throughout all areas related to peace and security. In addition to UNSCR 1325 (2000), there are eight other resolutions which make up the WPS agenda: 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015), and 2467 (2019).

It is misleading to identify the year 2000 as the origin of the WPS agenda. A long history of feminist activism preceded the adoption of UNSCR 1325. For instance, in May 1919 the newly formed Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) met in Zürich to pass a series of resolutions on women's equality, disarmament, the abolishment of the right to declare war and to conscript individuals for military service. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women activists continued to meet and organize for the recognition of women as key and indispensable agents of peace. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 was the direct outcome of transnational feminist networks and activists lobbying for the inclusion of



women and gender perspectives into national and international peace and security agendas.

In order to implement the WPS agenda at the national level, UN Member States can create National Action Plans (NAPs) to communicate their commitment to the promotion of women's participation and the integration of a gender perspective in peace and security. As of January 2019, 79 UN member states have adopted a NAP to implement UNSCR 1325. Switzerland, one of the very first countries to ever endorse a NAP on WPS, has recently launched its fourth NAP, active for five years (2018-2022). This fourth NAP builds on the first NAP (2007-2009), the second NAP (2010-2012) and the third NAP (2013-2016). Previously, the implementation of the third Swiss NAP 1325 (2013-2016) was monitored by the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDAG) 1325 within the Department of Human Security (AMS) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The IDAG 1325 generates reports which are then submitted to the Swiss Parliament. In addition, civil society has conducted its own monitoring via the Working Group (WG) 1325, which is made up of a wide range of Swiss civil society organizations. In 2016, WG 1325 published the independent alternative report *Women, Peace and Security: Reloaded*, which offered a critical and comprehensive reflection of Switzerland's implementation of the WPS agenda, including recommendations for future action.

Responding to the reflections and recommendations proposed by WG 1325 in the alternative report, the project 'Civil Society Contribution to the Implementation of the Swiss NAP 1325' was developed. This project — jointly led by PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG), KOFF/swisspeace, and cfd: The Feminist Peace Organization — takes up thematic topics identified in alternative report *Women, Peace and Security: Reloaded* in two distinct phases. The first phase (2018-2019) of the project critically evaluates the recent call to link the WPS agenda with the broader global security agenda to 'counter terrorism' and 'prevent violent extremism.' The second phase of the project (2020-2021) will consider how socio-economic conditions enable or constrain women's participation in peace processes.

Switzerland's fourth NAP 1325 has identified Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as a key priority of Switzerland's WPS agenda. The naming of PVE as a priority in the fourth NAP 1325 was, in part, a response to recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in their observations of Switzerland's third NAP 1325 (2013-2016). The Committee expressed concern that there were 'insufficient efforts to include a gender perspective in strategies to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism' and recommended Switzerland 'strengthen its efforts to include a gender perspective in strategies to prevent violent extremism and build the capacity of women and girls, including women civil society groups, to engage in efforts to counter terrorism.' In 2015, UNSCR 2242 also called for the WPS and PVE and counterterrorism (CT) agendas to be linked.

Given the move to integrate the WPS and PVE agendas in Switzerland and around the world, Swiss civil society is particularly invested in better understanding the relationship of these two agendas in both policy and practice. The project 'Civil Society Contribution to the Implementation of the Swiss NAP 1325,' has promoted dialogue among civil society and state actors and conducted research to learn from the experiences of civil society in contexts facing challenges related to PVE and WPS. The first phase of the project will culminate in a conference in Bern on September 18 on the topic of WPS and violence

prevention in order to discuss future implications of the WPS agenda in Switzerland and around the world.

The WPS agenda faces the challenges of an increasingly militarized and securitized world. The call to link the WPS and PVE agendas, for instance, is applauded by many as important progress in the development of security agendas that take gender as a central consideration. However, others argue that this linkage poses a number of concerns. One concern is that the linking of WPS and PVE agendas instrumentalizes the goals of WPS — namely women’s empowerment and gender equality — for a state security agenda without providing the sustained, material support actually needed to improve women’s lives. Another area of concern is that men as gendered subjects are being overlooked, and that gender analysis and gender mainstreaming are only focused on the role of women in the prevention of violence, contributing to gendered stereotypes of women’s inherent peacefulness or failing to acknowledge that women, too, can be agents of violence. There is also concern that the WPS endorsement of the PVE agenda would endorse security architecture which could potentially be harmful to women, women’s rights and civil society more broadly. WPS actors and civil society organizations around the world must keep a close eye on the developments in this field to ensure that the WPS agenda remains grounded in the principles of peacebuilding and human rights.

As Swiss civil society, the project ‘Civil Society Contribution to the Implementation of the Swiss NAP 1325’ is invested in increasing public and political awareness about WPS as well as closing the gap between policy and practice. The promotion of women’s agency and the development of lasting gender equality is essential for achieving sustainable peace. The WPS agenda and the fourth Swiss NAP 1325 are critical tools to achieve these aims.

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#### links

- [WILPF's Women, Peace and Security Programme](#)
- [Women, Peace & Security Reloaded](#)
- [Women, Peace and Security Switzerland's Fourth National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 \(2018 – 22\)](#)
- [Conference: Women, Peace & Security: Reclaim Prevention](#)

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# Gender equality: added value for peace and security



Cover picture of Switzerland's National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2018 – 2022): Picture: © Thomas Baumann.

With Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council sent out a strong signal. The role of women in wars and peacebuilding had been recognized for the first time: the risk they face of becoming victims of war-related violence, but also their potential as actors in peace processes. As a result, security was no longer understood from a purely military perspective, but rather from that of the individual. The resolution holds member states to account for working towards inclusive peace, personal safety and security, and sustainable development. Switzerland responded to this call as one of the first countries to submit a National Action Plan 1325 (NAP). Now in its fourth version, this NAP was regularly brought in line with international developments, as the range of topics became wider and wider with eight follow-up resolutions.

Protection against sexual violence in conflicts, prosecution of the culprits, and access to justice for victims are all still important areas of action for Switzerland. The country has also consistently emphasized the role of women as experts in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, such as in the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission in the Philippines. Studies have since shown that peace agreements are more sustainable and

better enshrined in society if women were involved in their negotiation processes. The fourth NAP 1325 further emphasizes the promotion of women in security policy, which tends to be dominated by men. Switzerland is therefore supporting young women in Europe and Central Asia in their professional careers in the areas of disarmament and arms control or military peacebuilding.

The Swiss NAP is also an example of how the work of the Security Council in New York can be interwoven with the human rights work in Geneva, with one of Switzerland's foreign policy concerns being to enhance conflict prevention and sustainable peace. The NAP explicitly refers to the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee (promotion of women in mediation, protection of women and girls through a better-controlled arms trade, and gender-sensitive prevention of violent extremism) and thus forms part of the reporting for the legally binding women's rights convention. In light of this, Switzerland welcomes the agreement between the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the CEDAW Committee.

Almost 20 years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, it is still important that the issue of "Women, Peace, and Security" is taken into account in the Security Council's policymaking. Countries have a responsibility to fully implement the resolutions and ensure that official, high-caliber political processes are designed to be inclusive. In this sense, Switzerland will continue to advocate visible results in the multilateral debates in New York and Geneva as well as at the OSCE in Vienna and NATO in Brussels.

Since peace, security, and the promotion of gender equality are pillars of Swiss foreign policy, Resolution 1325 is still an important issue for us. Or rather, as the FDFA Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Rights puts it: Gender equality is an added value for peace and security.

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#### [links](#)

[- Switzerland's National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 \(2018 – 2022\)](#)

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# Honduras – Women’s rights in a country marked by violence



Edna Ortega

Violent crime in Honduras has been a topic of public interest for years and is perceived as an obstacle to development. To tackle the problem of youth violence, the government has launched controversial assistance programs. Civil society organizations see them as a further contribution to the militarization of society. Since the coup against Manuel Zelaya 2009, the human rights situation in Honduras has deteriorated drastically. Currently Juan Orlando Hernández is the head of state of the country. His first election took place in 2013 in a climate of social tension and remains disputed.

In this interview, Edna Ortega explains how this delicate situation affects women and women’s rights organizations in Honduras. She is a lawyer and works for Brücke · Le pont as local coordinator of the development program in Honduras. As part of her engagement, she deals in depth with topics such as human rights, women’s rights, labor rights and children’s rights.

**Can you describe the situation of civil society in Honduras?**

The government has dictatorial features and especially feminist NGOs are opposing it. Most



NGOs do not recognize the government as legitimate and sadly, there is no conversation between the two. There is a lack of respect between the government and social movements including NGOs especially if they have different opinions.

### **Why do the NGOs oppose the government?**

Because the elections were neither, free nor fair. The government is doing everything it can to stay in power. It even changed the constitution.

### **Is the government oppressing women?**

Since the current government came to power, there have been several setbacks in terms of international law and the respect for women's rights and human rights in general. Previously, the head of the National Institute of Women had the rank of a minister. Now women disappear from high positions in the government and Women's Offices lost any decision-making power. Structures that guarantee women's rights are missing and mostly they are only used for propaganda purposes and government assistance programs.

Another big problem in Honduras are femicides – murders committed against women for reasons of gender. Most affected are young women. In 2017 for example over 380 femicides were reported. 2018 was even worse: In January, 52 women were killed by their partners in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa alone – two of the most dangerous cities for women in the country. The local authorities usually remain inactive. Most of the murders stay uninvestigated.

### **What is the role of women in Honduras in the context of gang violence?**

In Honduras we have a big problem with gang violence, especially related to drug trafficking. Criminal men often force their female partners to commit criminal acts. Let me give you an example: In Honduras paid murders are often carried out by two people on a motorbike. One rides and the other one shoots with a gun. Therefore, a law prohibited two men riding on a bike. However, it is not forbidden for a man and a woman to do so. Organized criminals now train women to shoot people, while riding a bike. The government is not prepared for such cases. When the women are caught, they go to jail and they lose their family. They do not get any support.

### **Who are the NGOs in Honduras that defend women's rights? And what are they demanding?**

One example is the National Campaign Against Femicides (Tribuna contra los Femicidios). As the name says, this is an NGO network against femicides. Those organizations do studies, which show that the legislation is not providing justice for those murders. They also do a lot of advocacy work to raise awareness in the public.

### **Can you say a little more about those femicides? Who is committing them and why?**

In Honduras, there is a patriarchal society. Those are hate crimes. This patriarchy is nourished by the Church and the media and manifests itself in the form of machismo. We hear for example a lot about women, who work in big companies, whose labor rights are violated and who get abused. They cannot get any help, because the institution that is

supposed to help them will not support them and even worse, they may abuse the women as well! It is a structural problem.

**At the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019, the migrant caravans on their way from Latin America to the USA attracted great media attention. Can you say something about the situation of the women in those caravans?**

Many women flee with their children to escape the violence. They know the road is dangerous but the risk to stay in their community is higher. The government of Honduras but also of other Central American countries do not have a gender-focused policy to provide support for the specific needs of the women on these roads. One example are the emergency kits. These contain dental care and other important items. Products for menstruating women however, are completely missing.

Another important issue is stigmatization. Whenever the caravan started in San Pedro Sula in November 2018, the government criminalized the families and especially the women who were leaving for this road. They accused them of putting their children in danger. However, the real question should be: Why are they leaving? Why are they taking this risk?

**Has the women's situation in the last years gotten worse or better?**

The NGOs are working very hard. However, without the governments support there will be no change. I have not seen any progress concerning women's rights in Honduras in the last 10 years.

**How can we from Switzerland as a Swiss NGO help?**

The Swiss NGOs can help to empower local activists and they can strengthen the capacities of local NGOs by supporting them.

**Why are you personally fighting for women's rights in Honduras?**

I am a lawyer and already my first work was at a local NGO helping women, who experienced violence. I think that with this work we can make a better world, even if we are focusing on one specific issue. Furthermore, I believe in people and I think that local NGOs are very important. They have the local knowledge and they challenge our inactive government.

**Is there anything you would like to add?**

Yes, maybe one point: For civil society, it is very important to stay innovative and to work with youth. The young people are the ones who are shaping the future. In addition, let us not forget to also include young men. To achieve gender equality we need to work with women and men.

[Interview of](#)

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#### links

- [Brücke · Le pont website: Honduras between violence and hope \(in German\)](#)
- [Brücke · Le pont website: Projects in Honduras \(in German\)](#)

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# Ensuring recognition for women mediators



Peacebuilding workshop in Mindanao. Picture: © Conciliation Resources.

In the field of conflict mediation, women play a vital role. From the grassroots to formal mediation processes, they are often the bridge between communities, armed groups and politicians. As the world prepares to mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 next year, we look at the role women play in mediation and ask why it is that the number of women involved in formal peace negotiations remains so low?

There are several reasons why, two decades after the adoption of this resolution, we still don't see equal participation in this space. One major contributing factor is the lack of recognition of the role women already play. Many people think that there aren't enough women mediators, however this misconception stems from a lack of understanding of what mediation actually means.

Women have been actively involved in mediation throughout history. Conciliation Resources supports women across a number of countries to mediate conflict in their communities. From the women who led efforts to reconcile villages following the previous Ebola outbreak in West Africa, to young women in the Central African Republic who initiated discussions between ex-Séléke and members of their community.

There are also examples of women mediators operating at national and international levels. The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition participated in the formal peace process, and in

the Philippines, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer was Chair of the government peace panel during negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

As part of the Afghan peace process, I worked closely with Afghan women and experienced how they mediated community conflict on a daily basis. They would often take huge risks to provide safe spaces for women and other groups to come together. At the same time, women were engaged in highly political and dangerous negotiations with armed insurgents, including the Taliban. Unfortunately, these examples are often not cited, and the credit for their successes frequently taken by male politicians.

In order to bring about change, several all-women mediator networks have been established. These aim to advance the meaningful inclusion of women mediators and obtain recognition for the roles they are already playing in peace processes. One such network is Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC), which I am privileged to coordinate. WMC brings together women from many different regions, and with diverse experiences of conflict mediation – from the grassroots to the political.

Recognising that a combined voice will strengthen them further, our networks have joined forces to become a Global Alliance of Women Mediators Networks, including the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, Nordic Women Mediators Network and FemWise. Sharing learning among members, and providing mutual support is an important part of these networks. However, even more significantly they raise the question not of how can we better equip women to do mediation, but how can we get better at acknowledging and elevating the vital work they are already doing?

### [Conciliation Resources](#)

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### [links](#)

- [Responding to Ebola-driven conflict](#)
- [“Peace is our future”: Youth peace committees in Central African Republic](#)
- [Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition](#)
- [Miriam Coronel-Ferrer: The Mindanao Peace Talks](#)
- [Women Mediators across the Commonwealth \(WMC\)](#)



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# Assessing barriers and opportunities for women's participation in peacekeeping



Front cover of the Baseline Study.

The United Nations has set a target for women to make up 20% of police contributions and 15% of military contributions to peace operations by 2020. However, in 2017 the proportion of female police and military peacekeepers remained well below target, oscillating between 2% and 4% for military personnel and between 6% and 10% for police personnel. In November of that year, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau launched the Elsie Initiative, an ambitious five-year international project aimed at helping overcome the barriers to increasing women's meaningful participation in peace operations. At present, there is a lack of solid and widely shared evidence base of what constitutes the barriers, leaving the UN and its Member States to largely rely on anecdotal evidence or individual testimonies in decision-making and policy development with regards to women's participation in peace operations.

DCAF, with financial support from Global Affairs Canada and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, is developing and piloting a Barrier Assessment Methodology under the research component of Elsie Initiative, which aims to develop innovative measures in order to

incentivize transformational change. An initial Baseline Study published by DCAF in 2018 identified a set of 14 barriers to women's participation in peace operations and since further research has reduced and combined those barriers into 10; eligible pool, deployment selection, deployment criteria, household constraints, top down leadership, inadequate accommodation and equipment, negative experiences, disincentives to redeploy, stereotypical gender roles, and social exclusion.

The Barrier Assessment Methodology that DCAF is developing in partnership with Cornell University provides a systematic and comprehensive framework that allows researchers in Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (TPCCs) to support national institutions in identifying which barriers are present in their specific context, and which have the largest negative overall impact on the deployment of women. The assessment is designed to provide TPCCs with actionable recommendations to overcome these barriers, increase the representation of uniformed women in UN deployments and maximise their impact. Once finalised in 2020, the Barrier Assessment Methodology will be made publicly available for any research organisation or security institution to use freely to assess barriers in any country that wishes to change its policies or practices to increase women's participation in peace operations.

DCAF, together with Cornell University (overseeing the quality and statistical significance of the research) and national partners (responsible for data collection), is piloting the methodology in eight countries, specially selected for their prominence as contributors of male and female military and police personnel. A comparative report with specific country chapters will be released in 2020.

The Barrier Assessment Methodology is also instrumental for the Elsie Initiative Fund launched in March 2019, another key component of the Elsie Initiative. The Multi Donor Trust Fund will provide TPCCs, as well as UN organizations, with flexible funding to support evidence-based activities that aim to accelerate progress towards achieving UN targets on the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations. Institutions wishing to access the fund will first need to undergo an assessment based on the Barrier Assessment Methodology.

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#### links

- [Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations](#)
- [Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study](#)
- [Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women In Peace Operations](#)

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# Peace Table in Colombia: “Let us move together towards the truth”



At the end of the Peace Table, participants received a pot of earth, seeds and a paper flower with motivational sayings. Picture: @ PeaceWomen Across the Globe.

The women walk through the dense forest. Stopping at a tree they read the yellow note attached to it. It says, “I have understood that I can’t stay with this pain; I want to learn to forgive.”

One woman says she wanted to commit suicide, the pain of her experiences during the conflict in Colombia had become intolerable. But then she decided: “I can’t do the perpetrators the favour of not living anymore, after what has been done to me.” The women continue walking. At the start of the forest path a board called on the women: “Let us move together towards the truth.”

The 20 women participated in a Peace Table that took place in May in Popayan, in southern Colombia. It was the first of four regional Peace Tables organised this year by COMUNITAR, PeaceWomen Across the Globe’s partner organisation. It forms part of PWAG’s worldwide Peace Table programme.

The Colombian “Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-

Repetition” is cooperating in these Peace Tables to ensure that women become part of the peace process and that their experiences are not forgotten. PWAG provides essential support, particularly important as the Colombian state, which finances the Commission’s work, has cut its budget by 40 percent.

In Popayan, Alejandra Miller Restrepo, a member of the PWAG board and of the Truth Commission, talked about the state of the peace process and explained the Commission’s goals. One of its aims is to include women’s testimonies in the truth-finding process and in the building of the historical record of the armed conflict. Her focus and that of the Commission is both on the women’s pain and suffering and on their stories of resistance, “what you did to survive,” she told the women. Including both aspects ensures that the women are regarded not only as victims, but also as women with agency.

Five members of local truth commissions recorded the women’s statements during the Peace Table. They know that the statements will remain anonymous, but often find it difficult to talk about their experiences. Spending time with women who listen and share similar experiences makes it easier for them to open up. At home, they repress the memories. “We do not dare to cry because we don’t want to burden the family,” said one of the women. Another expressed what many thought: “This is a place where we can give free rein to our feelings – to grief and to the joy that we are not alone.” After two days, 14 out of the 20 women had told their stories to the Truth Commission staff.

The experiences from the regional Peace Tables will be exchanged at the national Peace Table, to be held in Medellín towards the end of 2019. All the women who attended the regional Peace Tables will be invited to participate to ensure accountability and to strengthen the women’s resources and networks.

A central component of the Peace Tables is the women’s psycho-social support. The forest walk brings the women, many of whom were driven from their land during the conflict, into nature and re-awakens memories. At the conclusion of the Peace Table, each woman received a pot of earth, seeds and a paper flower with motivational sayings. They have learned that they can talk about the atrocities they have experienced, that they can forgive without forgetting. The process of dealing with the past, in which the Truth Commission’s report will play an important role, will ultimately ensure this.

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#### [links](#)

- [PeaceWomen Across the Globe \(projects\)](#)
- [Corporation of Ecofeminist women Comunitar\(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Colombian Truth Commission \(in Spanish\)](#)

- [Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres \(in Spanish\)](#)



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# Peace – putting the genders on an equal footing



At the workshop on competences and resources within the framework of the project "Career Mentoring for Migrant Women" of cfd. Picture: cfd.

As a feminist peace organization, cfd works with a broad and positive interpretation of the concept of peace, which encompasses all forms of violence, exclusion, and discrimination. The term peace not only implies the absence of war or physical violence, but also equality and justice for all people, no matter their (biological and social) gender, sexual orientation, origin, social status, political convictions, or religious beliefs.

cfd's main focus is on achieving equal rights and gender equality for women and girls. This requires gender-specific structural discrimination to be analyzed.

## Thinking globally

What does this mean in practical terms? cfd implements projects in Switzerland and abroad with the aim of promoting social peace through gender equality. We concentrate on three sectors: gender violence, promoting women in economic terms, and including them on a social level.

In Switzerland, for example, in addition to our efforts to combat violence against women (16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign), we run a professional mentoring scheme for highly qualified migrant women. What does this scheme have to do with peace? Our understanding of peace embraces the economic empowerment of women who experience structural discrimination, which contributes to a more just and peaceful society. Through its work, cfd calls structures of power and oppression into question, especially in cases where multiple discrimination is at play (gender and migration).

By implementing its international cooperation projects, cfd is supporting the equal social, political, legal, and economic participation and involvement of *all people*. In Israel, for example, our *Soot – Stimme* project aimed to strengthen Arab women's participation in politics. Palestinian women hold less than 5 per cent of Israel's political positions, resulting in their concerns drawing little attention from political bodies and their position being undermined. Project participants learn to speak up (*Soot* in Arabic) for the rights of women and children, and to combat discrimination, prejudice, and violence.

### **Human rights-based approach**

On a political level, cfd is, of course, also committed to taking a human rights-based approach and ensuring that the voice of civil society is heard by political decision-makers. This is why national and international networking is one of cfd's primary duties. cfd is a member of the steering group of the NAP 1325 project (Women, Peace, and Security), the NGO Coordination post Beijing (which oversees monitoring carried out by CEDAW, among other things), the Forum for Human Rights in Israel/Palestine, and the Core Group Network Istanbul Convention, etc. Wherever possible, cfd takes part in and actively shapes debates on gender equality, peace, and migration policy.

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### [links](#)

- [cfd website](#)
- [cfd: NAP 1325 Women, Peace, and Security \(in German\)](#)
- [NGO Coordination post Beijing \(in German\)](#)
- [Forum for Human Rights in Israel/Palestine](#)
- [Core Group Network Istanbul Convention \(in German\)](#)

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# Remembering Women's Stories in the Name of Equality and Peace



Fiona Bawn-Thompson performing in *The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII*

In today's political climate, where far-right movements have gained momentum across the globe, and have indeed come to power in some of the world's largest democracies, such as the United States, Brazil, and Italy, the need to promote gender equality and peace is greater than ever.

The arts are an ideal space for doing so – through storytelling, audience members connect with ideas in ways that would not otherwise be possible. Telling the stories of women in war dismantles mainstream patriarchal narratives where women are often overlooked, and simultaneously challenges traditional viewpoints that would see women as passive, submissive, and unfit for the arena of war. These stories show that women *were* involved in major historical events, remind people of the pivotal role women play today, and highlight the importance of gender equality going forward, contributing as it does to more sustainable and peaceful societies.

These are the goals of Smashing Times, an arts organisation based in Dublin, Ireland, who have been running *The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII* for the past two years now. This show is a creative reimagining of moments from the lives of women during World War II,

recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as women stood up against fascism and totalitarianism.

Among the women whose stories feature are Mary Elmes, a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazis; and Marta Hillers, author of *Eine Frau in Berlin* which detailed the mass rape of women by the Red Army in the aftermath of World War II. The story of Maria Eugenia Jasińska, from Łódź, Poland, is also included, a member of the resistance who gave up her life rather than give names to the Nazis; alongside that of Neus Català Pallejà from Spain, an active collaborator with the French Resistance during World War II, and a concentration camp survivor, who sadly passed away recently at the incredible age of 103.

Each performance is followed by a post-show discussion with the artists and invited guest speakers to explore powerful women's stories in history and themes of gender equality and peace in Ireland, Northern Ireland and internationally. The show and subsequent discussion involve citizens in remembrance, debate and learning in relation to women's stories of World War II. Through highlighting the role played by ordinary yet extraordinary women in challenging fascism, and the terrible hardships they endured, the value of tolerance, equality, and peace for society is impressed upon audiences and participants. The performance went on national and international tour to Ireland, Northern Ireland and Germany from September 2017 to February 2018, receiving an immensely positive response.

### [Smashing Times](#)

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Writer from Dublin, Ireland, Office Administrator with Smashing Times

### links

- [The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII](#)
- [Smashing Times](#)
- [Féilim James](#)



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reports

# Gender Inclusion for Peace: the contribution of local media in the Sahel



During the shooting of the documentary "Women and Politics" in Mali – 2018. Picture: Fondation Hironnelle

In fragile states and regions faced with major crises such as the Sahel, women and girls face specific challenges participating in public life and are usually excluded from political and peace processes. Women are often victims and sometimes perpetrators of violence and their specific motivations to participate in armed groups and illicit activities need to be addressed. Fondation Hironnelle promotes gender equality and inclusiveness in its media, as well as dialogue initiatives and trust-building measures between populations and their representatives to empower women to be positive actors that contribute to peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Studio Tamani in Mali and Studio Kalangou in Niger are concrete media initiatives demonstrating the crucial role of local media for women's participation in fragile societies, as well as the possibility for local development and local ownership of dialogue processes including women representatives from all sectors of societies.

Through carefully designed editorial productions, such as the video-documentary series on "Women rights program" in Studio Tamani, our local media help the population (men and women) understand how gender inequality and exclusion of women and girls in the Sahel



prevents them from playing a positive role in building peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Yet the inclusion of women is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16. In Niger, after several radio programs focusing on the status of women in the Nigerian society, the newsroom has decided to dedicate once a week, as of September 2019, the program “*Forum*”, a daily live talk-show, to the women’s perspectives on what is going on in the country, including the insecurity, failures in the national cohesion, etc. The show will be prepared and presented by female journalists, with female invitees, but reach the whole population (men and women).

As in peace processes, the participation of women in local media is not a given. It requires the Editor-in-Chief and their teams to integrate the inclusivity factors in their daily work: recruitment of female journalists to be at the table when the stories are discussed, building of balanced databases of contacts to invite female participants, experts and witnesses in debate shows, systematically be balanced when interviewing people, etc. Only then can local media better give voice to women and contribute to the improvement of women’s representation and women’s participation in fragile societies such as the Sahel.

The media can provide a holistic approach that looks at women both as victims and perpetrators of violence. They can ask how innovative tools and confidence-building measures in the society can be effective in promoting inclusion and nonviolent solutions to conflicts such as the ones in the Sahel. Only if the ways women can participate in public life and become part of peaceful solutions are addressed, can cycles of violence be overcome and peace and development be promoted.

#### [Fondation Hironnelle](#)

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Director

#### [links](#)

- [Fondation Hironnelle Media](#)
- [Studio Tamani \(in French\)](#)
- [Studio Kalangou \(in French\)](#)
- [Studio Kalangou: women \(in French\)](#)

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reports

# Switzerland commits to gender mainstreaming in peace processes



Cercles de Paix with Malian women in the refugee camps in Burkina Faso in 2018. Photo: Wildaf-Mali.

Between 1990 and 2000, the world was afflicted by crises in which several categories of people were held hostage, and these conflicts tended to affect men and women differently. Women and children were the main victims. Women raped individually and en masse were subject to sexual exploitation; children were killed or conscripted to fight; families were torn apart. However, the specific needs of women were not taken into account and they were not involved in the ensuing peace processes. This state of affairs could not be allowed to continue. Thanks to international civil society, human rights organisations, and pressure from lobbyists, on 30 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women. It was the first organisation to recognise the damaging effects of conflict on girls and women, but also their importance in conflict prevention and resolution. The Resolution is based on four main pillars: participation, protection, prevention and post-conflict recovery.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in 2000, is one of the documents that forms the basis for Swiss policy on gender in peacebuilding. In particular, it calls for gender mainstreaming and for women to be involved at all levels in peace processes. It also demands greater protection for women and girls in armed conflict

situations. The Federal Council aligns its peace and security policy with this Resolution and aims to ensure women are more involved in the peace processes that it supports. Switzerland contributes to the implementation of Resolution 1325 through various actions, both operational and related to policy-making in this area. Abroad, it supports practical projects and organisations seeking to improve protection for women and girls in conflicts and to ensure they are more involved in peace processes.

Accordingly, in 2015, during the instability over the signature of the peace agreement in Mali and the collapse of the country's social fabric, Switzerland funded a dialogue project, in liaison with the NGO Wildaf-Mali, enabling women and girls from different communities to talk to one another without fear and without discrimination based on ethnicity, culture or religion. This is because throughout the peace process in Mali until its implementation, women's involvement had not been a priority, despite the mobilisation of women's organisations, the support of technical and/or financial partners, and the national and international frameworks signed by Mali. This project mobilised women as peacemakers both locally and nationally.

All the research has shown not only that the involvement of women and girls is essential to building lasting peace, but also that States seem to be particularly vulnerable to conflict when large groups of people have no power and do not play a part in running the country (especially women and girls). Working for equal rights is a vital link to restoring trust between the State and communities, and bringing lasting peace. It is highly unlikely that the whole population will enjoy the dividends of peace if more than half of them are excluded from the system and their needs are not taken into account. Women form a sociological foundation on which endogenous peace and security processes can be built because of their role in society (they are effective advisers to their children, families and partners, and therefore to their community).

This Cercles de Paix [Circles of Peace] project, which provided an inclusive forum for dialogue and discussion between Malian women, was not only aligned with the recommendations of Mali's highest authorities; it also fulfilled a genuine need at the time, responding to the concerns that underpinned UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security' in the case of the Mali crisis: that women should participate fully in the peace processes and their needs for protection, prevention and post-conflict recovery should be taken into account.

At the same time, in 2019, as the peace agreement continues to be implemented, Switzerland has funded another Cercles de Paix activity through Wildaf-Mali, with children – the main victims of the violence that occurred during the crises that shook the country. It has emerged from the activities run with these two key players – women and children – that there is a real need to lay the foundations of genuine social cohesion at the base of Malian society and at all levels. It is on the basis of this finding that Switzerland has decided to implement a program with these two agents of change – women and children – from 2019. The aim of this new program is to apply the lessons learned from the inclusive dialogue on a larger scale and encourage more women, children, refugees, displaced peoples and, above all, the parties in conflict to do the same – to restore trust and bring lasting peace to Mali. Lasting peace demands a harmonious partnership between women and men. It is therefore important to ensure that men realise that equal opportunities for women are not a threat to peace and stability.

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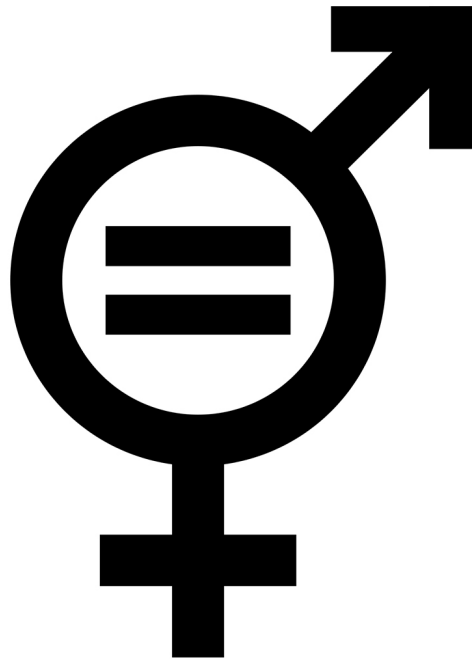
#### [links](#)

- [The circle of peace – The women bringing peace to life \(in French\)](#)
- [Movie about Cercles de Paix at Caux, 2018 \(in French\)](#)
- [Implementation in Switzerland of UN Resolution 1325: Women, peace and security \(in French\)](#)

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reports

# For a multilateral gender equality



Symbol. Creative Commons

Progress of equality is necessary for the progress of peace and human well-being. Among all sorts of equalities, gender equality has been a major concern for decades. Possible setbacks in the status of women are to be prevented and more needs to be done to achieve de facto as de jure equality. Nevertheless, as slow as it is, the process seems irreversible.

The answers to some of these slowness' will be found in a more general progress of equality. Enlarging the prospects of reducing discriminations against women to a broader context offers the opportunity to see how reducing discriminations against other social groups will favour the status of women, thus guaranteeing integration and social cohesion and guaranteeing the fulfilment and universal realization of all fundamental rights for all.

The inclusion of young people, the elderly, people with disabilities, various social and minority groups, LGBTI people, all in their dignity and rights, in the processes of peace and decision-making of our humanity and of our communities, large and small, reinforces our infrastructures of peace and therefore the condition of women.

Gender equality must also allow men and women alike, individuals and institutions to reduce also discriminations against men. Responses to a shorter longevity, predominantly male criminalization (93% of men in Swiss prisons) and the decline in cultural or imposed learning of violence favour both the status of women and the overall quality of life.

APRED has been working on non-militarization and for countries without armies for soon two decades, including the issue of knowing whether the status of women is better in these totally demilitarized countries. More in-depth studies are still needed, but an overview analysis of Gender Specific Development Indexes suggests that the absence of an army in a country favours the progress of gender equality.

## APRED

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## links

- [Non-militarisation](#)
- [Army-less countries](#)
- [Gender Index 1](#)
- [Gender Index 2](#)



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in depth

# Including all victims of sexual violence



LGBTQ rally. Image: Rosemary Ketchum.

One of the main goals of Resolution 1325 is to protect women and girls from sexual violence in conflict-ridden regions. It also provides a basis for prosecuting sexual violence in wars – which the International Criminal Court was able to utilize for the Yugoslav Wars, for example.

However, the focus on women and girls bothers certain researchers, such as Jamie Hagen, who focus on the experiences of LGBTQ people in wars. Using the terms “women” and “girls” excludes other people and constitutes a binary understanding of gender (separation into men and women). As mentioned at the start, the resolution has helped sexual gender-based violence such as rape be understood and outlawed as an instrument of war and a war crime. However, Jamie Hagen emphasizes in an article that LGBTQ people are victims of this sexual violence too. These people are specifically at risk of being subject to sexual violence in armed conflicts as they have already been forced onto the margins of society in periods of peace. Hagen is convinced that it is therefore important to examine who exactly can be victims of sexual violence in wars. As a response to this question, Hagen believes the answers provided by the resolution are too narrow. We need to take heed of the experiences of LGBTQ people and recognize that they are also vulnerable to sexual gender-based violence. This is something that UN organizations and NGOs have largely neglected to do so far. Up until now, there has only been one report that documents sexual violence towards LGBTQ people in a war-torn environment. This was published in 2014 and

describes incidents in Iraq, involving rapes of men on the basis that they were not “manly” enough, for example. Hagen is therefore calling for a broadening of the term “victim”. In UN documents building on Resolution 1325, the terms “women” and “gender” have been used almost interchangeably until now. Hagen is thus suggesting that the term “gender” be defined in all-inclusive and exact terms, allowing LGBTQ people to be included in Resolution 1325. They should also be given a higher level of priority in practice so that the safety concerns of all people are respected.

Conversely, it could be argued that cases of sexual violence against LGBTQ people are very hard to record as there are too few of them and the victims do not talk about them out of fear. First of all, however, this claim cannot be substantiated because hardly any attention has been paid to these cases as yet and, second of all, assistance should not just be given to those in the majority.

It is therefore high time to define the term “gender” in exact terms in Resolution 1325 and its related documents, and to make sure that it includes everyone. This can ensure that all suffering is recognized and all victims are included in peace processes.

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[links](#)

- [Kirby, Paul & Shepherd, Laura: Reintroducing women, peace and security](#)
- [Hagen, Jamie: Queering women, peace and security](#)



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news

# Conference: Women, Peace & Security: Reclaim Prevention



Street Art by Swoon. Image: Creative Commons.

cfed – the feminist peace organization, PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG) and the Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding KOFF are pleased to invite you to a conference in the framework of the project “Civil Society Contribution to the Implementation of the Swiss NAP 1325”. The conference is organized in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

**Wednesday 18 September 2019, 9.15 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. (followed by a reception) at the Stiftung PROGR, Zentrum für Kulturproduktion, Auditorium Waisenhausplatz 30, 3011 Bern**

The conference will bring together experts from civil society, academia, and state institutions to discuss the Swiss National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP 1325). It will shed light on its political relevance at the domestic and international level from a variety of perspectives and contexts. The following questions will be explored:

– How can civil society play a role in shaping the debates on Women, Peace and Security to strengthen the link between policy and practice, in Switzerland and beyond? To what extent are women involved in decision-making about peace and security at community, national

and international levels?

– How is the Swiss NAP 1325 reflective of peacebuilding and violence prevention work on the ground? What are the implications of linking Women, Peace and Security and the prevention of violent extremism?

We look forward to critical and engaging discussions with you.

[KOFF/Swisspeace](#)

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Program Officer

links

- [Learn more](#)
- [Registration form](#)

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news

# Where is the spirit of “never again”?



Visiting a young Iraqi in Mosul who is fighting against the raging hate speeches in the divided society, Iraq, January 2019. Image: Lea Suter.

Three generations after the Second World War, Terry says that the “never again” spirit no longer exists. She sighs in a determined rather than depleted way, adding: “We have to ask ourselves whether we – each and every one of us – have done enough to convey this very sentiment that was passed onto us by our parents and grandparents to our own children.”

When I think about the scenes from countries in conflict that I have visited as a peace blogger, I know that Terry is right. We have failed to keep the “never again” spirit alive. Peace has no voice and the same is true here in safe Switzerland.

Terry is from Palestine and works for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Jerusalem. This was one of dozens of discussions I had with members of the SDC’s Conflict and Human Rights network at its meeting in Geneva from June 18 to 20. Over 100 people from more than 30 countries came here to exchange experiences, challenges, and solutions.

The issue of how to improve communication about peace cropped up again and again in the discussions. We need more efficient communication to combat the increasing normalization of violence. Being able to explain peace work is key to it being understood and financed. You can find more on this topic in my latest blog and appeal for strategic



peace communication.

Peace Prints

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links

- [Lea Suter's "Peace Prints" blog](#)
- [The whole story on Iraq \(in German\)](#)

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news

# Religion & Conflict Transformation Course



View of the old town of Jerusalem, Israel. Andrey Krav, 2014

How does religion influence peace and conflict in today's world? Gain a better understanding of conflicts with religious dimensions and how they can be transformed.

**swisspeace, in collaboration with the University of Basel, offers a Religion & Conflict Transformation Course in Basel from 06-08 November 2019.**

In this course participants will:

- gain an understanding of concepts and key terms regarding religion related to peace and conflict and study how religions can drive conflict and promote peace.
- explore conflicts with a religious dimension through case studies of Myanmar, Iraq and a Sub-Saharan African case.
- learn about approaches that address conflicts with a religious dimension and familiarize themselves with a conflict analysis tool designed for conflicts with religious dimensions.
- look into the roles religiously motivated actors play in conflict areas.
- become part of a network that deals critically with questions about religion, peace and

conflict.

Interested in participating? The number of participants is limited, so don't hesitate and apply today.

[Continuing Education](#)

[academy@swisspeace.ch](mailto:academy@swisspeace.ch)

links

- [Further information](#)
- [Apply now](#)

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calendar

# Events & News

## KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE

Upcoming events organised by KOFF member organisations can be found on our [KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE](#).

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## SWISSPEACE KURSE

You can now register for the following swisspeace courses:

- [Business, Conflict and Peacebuilding](#)
- [Dealing with the Past Course](#)
- [National Dialogue & Peace Mediation](#)

Information on the entire swisspeace course offering on peacebuilding and conflicts can be found on [OUR WEBSITE](#).

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## KOFF

Die Schweizer Plattform für Friedensförderung  
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La piattaforma svizzera per la promozione della pace  
The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

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KOFF is a dialogue and exchange platform facilitated by swisspeace. It is jointly supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the following Swiss NGOs which are members of the platform:

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Alliance Sud	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	Frauenbund
APRED	IAMANEH Schweiz	Society for Threatened Peoples
artasfoundation	Interpeace	Switzerland
Baha'i	Lucerne Initiative for Peace and	Solidar Switzerland
Brücke · Le pont	Security (LIPS)	SOS Children's Villages
Caritas Switzerland	medico international schweiz	Stiftung für Integrale
Caux – Initiatives of Change	MIR Switzerland	Friedensförderung
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Green Cross Switzerland	PeaceWomen Across the Globe	Terre des Femmes Switzerland
Group for a Switzerland without an	Pestalozzi Children's Foundation	terre des hommes schweiz
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